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THE
ASIATIC SOCIETY OF BOMBAY
TOWN HALL, BOMBAY-1.

Mr. John M. Felt

Dear Sir,

London,

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Work now offered to the Public, was the last performance of one who often afforded amusement and instruction ; who possessed the talents of pleasing in a high degree ; whose labours were devoted to advance the interest of Religion and Morality ; and who, during the greater part of his life, was esteemed, beloved and respected by all to whom he was known. Unhappily for himself and his connections, the dictates of prudence were unattended to amidst the fashionable dissipation of the times. With many advantages, both natural and acquired, and with the most flattering prospects before him, he, by an act of folly, to give it no worse a name, plunged himself from a situation, in which he had every happiness to expect, into a state, which, to contemplate, must fill the mind with astonishment and horror. It was in some of the most dreadful moments of his life, when the exercise of every faculty might be presumed to be suspended, that the present work was composed : a work which will be

ever read with wonder, as exhibiting an extraordinary exertion of the mental powers in very unpropitious circumstances, and affording, at the same time, a lesson worthy the most attentive consideration, of every one into whose hands it may chance to fall. As the curiosity of the world will naturally follow the person whose solitude and confinement produced the instruction to be derived from this performance, a short Account of the Author is added. To enlarge on the merit of this Poem will be unnecessary. The feelings of every reader will estimate and proportionate its value. That it contains an awful admonition to the gay and dissipated, will be readily acknowledged by every reflecting mind, especially when it is considered as the bitter fruit of those fashionable indulgencies which brought disgrace and death upon its unhappy author, in spite of learning and genius, accomplishes the most captivating, and services the most important to mankind.

AN
ACCOUNT
OF
THE AUTHOR.

WILLIAM DODD was the eldest son* of a clergyman of the same name, who held the vicarage of Bourne, in the county of Lincoln, where he died the 8th day of August 1756, at the age of 54 years. His wife departed this life on the 21st of the preceding May. Their son was born at Bourne on the 29th day of May 1729, and, after finishing his school education, was admitted a Sizar of Clare-Hall, Cambridge, in the year 1745, under the tuition of Mr. John Courtail, since Archdeacon of Lewis. At the university he acquired the notice of his superiors by a close application to his studies; and in the year 1749-50, took his first degree of Bachelor of Arts with considerable reputation, his name being in the list of wranglers on that occasion. It was not, however, only in his academical pursuits that he was emulous of distinction. Having a pleasing form, a genteel address, and a lively imagination, he was equally celebrated for accomplishments which seldom accompany a life of learned retirement. In particular, he was fond of the elegancies of dress, and became, as he ludicrously expressed it, a zealous votary of the God of Dancing, to whose service he dedicated much of that time and attention which he could borrow from his more important avocations

* He speaks of himself as descended from Sir Thomas Overbury. •

The talents which he possessed he very early displayed to the public; and by the time he had attained the age of eighteen years, prompted by the desire of fame, and perhaps to increase his income, commenced author; in which character he began to obtain some degree of reputation.—At this period of his life, young, thoughtless, volatile, and unexperienced, he precipitately quitted the university, and relying entirely on his pen, removed to the metropolis, where he entered largely into the gaities of the town, was a constant frequenter of all places of public diversion, and followed every species of amusement with the most dangerous avidity. In this course, however, he did not continue long. To the surprise of his friends, who least suspected him of taking such a step, without fortune, with few friends, and destitute of all means of supporting a family, he hastily united himself, on the 15th of April 1751, in marriage with Miss Mary Perkins, daughter of one of the domestics of Sir John Dolben, a young lady then residing in Frith-street, Soho; who, though largely endowed with personal attractions, was certainly deficient in those of birth and fortune. To a person circumstanced as Mr. Dodd then was, no measure could be more imprudent, or apparently more ruinous and destructive of his future prospects in life. He did not, however, seem to view it in that light, but, with a degree of thoughtlessness natural to him, immediately took and furnished a house in Wardour-street. Thus dancing on the brink of a precipice, and careless of to-morrow, his friends began to be alarmed at his situation. His father came to town in great distress upon the occasion; and by parental injunction he quitted his house before winter. By the same advice he probably was induced to adopt a new plan for his future subsistence. On the 19th of October, in that year, he was ordained a Deacon by the Bishop of Ely, at Caius College, Cambridge; and with more prudence than he had ever shown before, devoted himself, with great assiduity, to the study and duties of his profession. In these pursuits he appeared so sincere, that he even renounced all attention to his favourite of lectures, Polite Letters. At the end of his Preface to the *Beauties of Shakspeare*, published in this year, he says, “For my own part, better and more important” “things henceforth demand my attention, and I here with no” “small pleasure take leave of Shakspeare and the Critics. As” “this work was begun and finished before I entered upon the” “sacred function, in which I am now happily employed, let me” “trust that my performance will prove no objection, since

"graver, and some very eminent members of the church, have thought it no improper employ to comment, explain, and publish the works of their own country poets."

The first service in which he was engaged as a clergyman, was to assist the Reverend Mr. Wyatt, vicar of West Ham, as his curate: thither he removed, and there he spent the happiest and more honourable moments of his life. His behaviour was proper, decent; and exemplary. It acquired him the respect, and secured him the favour of his parishioners so far, that, on the death of their lecturer in 1752, he was chosen to succeed him. His abilities had at this time every opportunity of being shown to advantage; and his exertions were so properly directed, that he soon became a favourite and popular preacher. Those who remember him at this period, will bear testimony to the indefatigable zeal which he exerted in his ministry, and the success which crowned his efforts. The follies of his youth seemed entirely extinguished, his friends viewed his conduct with the utmost satisfaction, and the world promised itself an example to hold out for the imitation of his brethren.

At this early season of his life he entertained favourable sentiments of the doctrine of Mr. Hutchinson; and was suspected to incline towards the opinions of the Methodists. A more mature age, however, induced him to renounce the one, and to disclaim the other. In 1752 he was appointed Lecturer of St. James, Garlick-hill, which two years afterwards he exchanged for the same post at St. Olave, Hart-street. About the same time he was appointed to preach Lady Moyer's Lectures at St. Paul's; where, from *The Visit of the Three Angels to Abraham*, and other similar passages from the Old Testament, he endeavoured to prove the commonly received doctrine of the Trinity. On the establishment of the Magdalen House, 1758, he was amongst the first and most active promoters of that charitable institution, which received great advantage from his zeal for its prosperity, and, even to the conclusion of his life, continued to be materially benefited by his labours.

From the time Mr. Dodd entered into the service of the Church, he resided at West Ham, and made up the deficiencies of his income by superintending the education of some young gentlemen who were placed under his care. In 1759 he took his degree of Master of Arts. In the year 1763, he was ap-

pointed Chaplain in Ordinary to the King, and about the same time became known to Dr. Squire, Bishop of St. David's, who received him into his patronage, presented him to the prebend of Brecon, and recommended him to the Earl of Chesterfield, as a proper person to be intrusted with the tuition of his successor in the title. The next year saw him Chaplain to his Majesty. In 1766 he took the degree of Doctor of Laws at Cambridge. He had some expectations of succeeding to the Rectory of West Ham; but having been twice disappointed, he resigned his lectureships both there and in the city, and quitted the place: "A place (says he to Lord Chesterfield) ever dear and ever regretted by me, the loss of which, truly affecting to my mind (for there I was useful, and there I trust I was loved), nothing but your Lordship's friendship and connection should have counterbalanced *."—From a passage in his *Thoughts in Prison*, it may be inferred that he was compelled to quit this his favourite residence; a circumstance which he pathetically laments, and probably with great reason, as the first step to that change in his situation, which led him insensibly to his last fatal catastrophe.

On his leaving West Ham he removed to a house in Southampton-row, and at the same time launched out into scenes of expence, which his income, by this time not a small one, was unequal to support. He provided himself with a country house at Ealing, and exchanged his chariot for a coach, in order to accommodate his pupils, who, besides his noble charge, were in general persons of family and fortune. About the same time it was his misfortune to obtain a prize of 1000*l.* in the state-lottery. Elated with this success, he engaged with a builder in a plan to erect a chapel near the palace of the Queen, from whom it took its name. He entered also into a like partnership at Charlotte Chapel, Bloomsbury; and both these schemes were for some time very beneficial to him, though much inferior to his then expensive habits of living. His expectations from the former of these undertakings were extremely sanguine. It is

* See Dedication to a Sermon, entitled "Popery is consistent with the Natural Rights of Men in general, and Englishmen in particular."

reported, that in fitting up the chapel near the palace, he flattered himself with the hopes of having some young royal auditors; and in that expectation assigned a particular pew or gallery for the heir apparent.—But in this, as in many other of his views, he was disappointed.

In the year 1772 he obtained the rectory of Hockliffe, in Bedfordshire, the first cure of souls he ever had. With this also he held the vicarage of Chalgrove; and the two were soon after consolidated. An accident happened about this time, from which he narrowly escaped with his life. Returning from his living, he was stopped near Pancras by a highwayman, who discharged a pistol into the carriage, which happily, as it was then thought, only broke the glass. For this fact the delinquent was tried, and on Dr. Dodd's evidence convicted, and hanged. Early in the next year Lord Chesterfield died, and was succeeded by our author's pupil, who appointed his preceptor his chaplain.

At this period Dr. Dodd appears to have been in the zenith of his popularity and reputation. Beloved and respected by all orders of people, he would have reached, in all probability, the situation which was the object of his wishes, had he possessed patience enough to have waited for it, and prudence sufficient to keep himself out of difficulties which might prove fatal to his integrity. But the habits of dissipation and expence had acquired too much influence over him. He had by their means involved himself in considerable debts. To extricate himself from them he was tempted to an act which entirely cut off every hope which he could entertain of rising in his profession, and totally ruined him in the opinion of the world. On the translation of Bishop Moss, in Feb. 1774, to the see of Bath and Wells, the valuable rectory of St. George, Hanover-square, fell to the disposal of the Crown, by virtue of the King's prerogative. Whether from the suggestion of his own mind, or from the persuasion of some friend, is uncertain; but on this occasion he took a step, of all others the most wild and extravagant, and least likely to be attended with success. He caused an anonymous letter to be sent to Lady Apsley, offering the sum of 3000*l.* if by her means he could be presented to the living. The letter was immediately communicated to the Chancellor, and, after being traced to the sender, was laid before his Majesty. The insult offered to so high an officer by the proposal, was followed by instant punishment. Dr. Dodd's name

was ordered to be struck out of the list of chaplains. The press teemed with satire and invective; he was abused and ridiculed in the papers of the day; and, to crown the whole, the transaction became a subject of entertainment in one of Mr. Foote's pieces at the Hay-market.

As no explanation could justify so absurd a measure, so no apology could palliate it. An evasive letter in the newspapers, promising a justification at a future day, was treated with universal contempt. Stung with remorse, and feelingly alive to the disgrace he had brought on himself, he hastily quitted the place where neglect and insult attended him, and went to Geneva to his pupil, who presented him to the living of Winge in Buckinghamshire, which he held with Hockliffe by virtue of a dispensation. Though encumbered with debts, he might still have retrieved his circumstances, if not his character, had he attended to the lessons of prudence; but his extravagance continued undiminished, and drove him to schemes which overwhelmed him with additional infamy. He descended so low as to become the editor of a newspaper; and is said to have attempted to disengage himself from his debts by a commission of bankruptcy, in which he failed. From this period every step led to complete his ruin. In the summer of 1776 he went to Paris, and, with little regard to decency, paraded it in a phaeton at the races on the plains of Sablons, dressed in all the foppery of the kingdom in which he then resided. He returned to England about the beginning of winter, and continued to exercise the duties of his function, particularly at the Magdalen Chapel, where he still was heard with approbation, and where his last sermon was preached, February 2, 1777, two days only before he signed the fatal instrument which brought him to an ignominious end.

Pressed at length by creditors, whose importunities he was unable longer to sooth, he fell upon an expedient, from the consequences of which he could not escape. He forged a bond, from his pupil Lord Chesterfield, for the sum of 4,200*l.* and upon the credit of it obtained a considerable sum of money. Detection of the fraud almost immediately followed. He was taken before a magistrate, and committed to prison. At the sessions held at the Old Bailey, February 24, his trial commenced; and the commission of the offence being clearly proved, he was pronounced guilty; but the sentence was postponed until the sentiments of the judges could be taken respect-

ing the admissibility of an evidence, whose testimony had been made use of to convict him.

This accident suspended his fate until the ensuing session. In the mean time, the doubt which had been suggested as to the validity of the evidence, was removed, by the unanimous opinion of the judges, that the testimony of the person objected to had been properly and legally received. This information was communicated to the criminal on the 12th of May; and on the 26th of the same month he was brought to the bar to receive his sentence. Being asked what he had to allege why it should not be pronounced upon him, he addressed the court in the following animated and pathetic speech: in the composition of which he is said to have been materially assisted by a very eminent writer.

“ MY LORD,

“ I now stand before you a dreadful example of human infirmity. I entered upon public life with the expectations common to young men whose education has been liberal, and whose abilities have been flattered; and, when I became a clergyman, considered myself as not impairing the dignity of the order. I was not an idle, nor I hope an useless minister. I taught the truths of Christianity with the zeal of conviction and the authority of innocence. My labours were approved, my pulpit became popular; and I have reason to believe, that of those who heard me, some have been preserved from sin, and some have been reclaimed. Condescend, my Lord, to think, if these considerations aggravate my crime, how much they must embitter my punishment!

“ Being distinguished and elated by the confidence of mankind, I had too much confidence in myself; and thinking my integrity what others thought it, established in sincerity, and fortified by religion, I did not consider the danger of vanity, nor suspect the deceitfulness of my own heart. The day of conflict came, in which temptation surprised and overwhelmed me. I committed the crime, which I entreat your Lordship to believe that my conscience hourly represents to me in its full bulk of mischief and malignity. Many have been overpowered by temptation, who are now among the penitent in heaven.

“ To an act now waiting the decision of vindictive justice, I will not presume to oppose the counterbalance of almost thirty

years (a great part of the life of man) passed in exciting and exercising charity; in relieving such distresses as I now feel, in administering those consolations which I now want. I will not otherwise extenuate my offence, than by declaring, what many circumstances make probable, that I did not intend to be finally fraudulent. Nor will it become me to apportion my punishment, by alleging that my sufferings have been not much less than my guilt. I have fallen from reputation, which ought to have made me cautious; and from a fortune, which ought to have given me content: I am sunk at once into poverty and scorn; my name and my crime fill the ballads in the street, the sport of the thoughtless, and the triumph of the wicked.

"It may seem strange, remembering what I have lately been, that I should still wish to continue what I am:—but contempt of death, how speciously soever it might mingle with Heathen virtues, has nothing suitable to Christian penitence. Many motives impel me to beg earnestly for life. I feel the natural horror of a violent death, and the universal dread of untimely dissolution. I am desirous of recompensing the injury I have done to the clergy, to the world, and to religion, and to efface the scandal of my crime by the example of my repentance. But, above all, I wish to die with thoughts more composed, and calmer preparation. The gloom of a prison, the anxiety of a trial, and the inevitable vicissitudes of passion, leave the mind little disposed to the holy exercises of prayer and self-examination. Let not a little time be denied me, in which I may, by meditation and contrition, be prepared to stand at the tribunal of Omnipotence, and support the presence of that Judge who shall distribute to all according to their works; who will receive to pardon the repenting sinner, and from whom the merciful shall obtain mercy.

"For these reasons, amidst shame and misery, I yet wish to live; and most humbly entreat, that I may be recommended by your Lordship to the clemency of his Majesty."

From this time the friends of Dr. Dodd were assiduously employed in endeavouring to save his life. Besides the petitions of many individuals, the members of the several charities which had been benefited by him, joined in applications to the Throne for mercy; the City of London likewise, in its corporate capacity, solicited a remission of the punishment, in consideration of the advantages which the public had derived from his various and

available exertions. The petitions were supposed to be signed by near thirty thousand persons. They were, however, of no avail. On the 15th of June the Privy Council assembled, and deliberated on the case of the several prisoners then under condemnation; and in the end a warrant was ordered to be made out for the execution of Dr. Dodd, with two others (one of whom was afterwards reprieved), on the 27th of the same month.

Having been flattered with hopes of a pardon, he appeared to be much shocked at the intimation of his approaching destiny; but resumed in a short time a degree of fortitude, sufficient to enable him to pass through the last scene of his life with firmness and decency. On the 26th he took leave of his wife and some friends, after which he declared himself ready to atone for the offence he had given to the world. His deportment was meek, humble, and devout, expressive of resignation and contrition, and calculated to inspire sentiments of respect for his person, and concern for his unhappy fate.

Of his behaviour at this awful juncture, a particular account was given by Mr. Villette, Ordinary of Newgate, in the following terms:

"On the morning of his death I went to him, with the Rev. Mr. Dobey, Chaplain of the Magdalen, whom he had desired to attend him to the place of execution. He appeared composed; and when I asked him how he had been supported, he said he had had some comfortable sleep, by which he should be the better enabled to perform his duty.

"As we went from his room, in our way to the chapel, we were joined by his friend, who had spent the foregoing evening with him, and also by another clergyman. When we were in the vestry adjoining the chapel, he exhorted his fellow-sufferer, who had attempted to destroy himself, but had been prevented by the vigilance of the keeper. He spoke to him with great tenderness and emotion of heart, entreating him to consider that he had but a short time to live, and that it was highly necessary that he, as well as himself, made good use of their time, implored pardon of God under a deep sense of sin, and looked to that Lord by whose mercy alone sinners could be saved. He desired me to call in the other gentleman, who likewise assisted him to move the heart of the poor youth: but the Doctor's words were the most pathetic and effectual. He lifted up his hands, and cried out, 'O Lord Jesus, have mercy on us, and give, O give

unto him, my fellow-sinner, that as we suffer together, we may go together to Heaven!’ His conversation to this poor youth was so moving, that tears flowed from the eyes of all present.

“When we went into the chapel to prayer and the holy communion, true contrition and warmth of devotion appeared evident in him throughout the whole service. After it was ended, he again addressed himself to Harris in the most moving and persuasive manner, and not without effect: for he declared that he was glad he had not made away with himself, and said he was easier, and hoped he should now go to heaven. The Doctor told him how Christ had suffered for them; and that he himself was a greater sinner than he, as he had sinned more against light and conviction, and therefore his guilt was greater; and that, as he was confident that mercy was shown to his soul, so he should look to Christ, and trust in his merits.

“He prayed God to bless his friends who were present with him, and to give his blessing to all his brethren the clergy; that he would pour out his Spirit upon them, and make them true ministers of Jesus Christ, and that they might follow the divine precepts of their heavenly Master. Turning to one who stood near him, he stretched out his hand, and said, ‘Now, my dear friend, speculation is at an end; all must be real! what poor, ignorant beings we are!’ He prayed for the Magdalens, and wished they were there, to sing for him the 23d psalm.’

“After he had waited some time for the officers, he asked what o’clock it was; and being told that it was half an hour after eight, he said, ‘I wish they were ready, for I long to be gone.’ He requested of his friends, who were in tears about him, to pray for him: to which he was answered by two of them, ‘We pray more than language can utter.’ He replied, ‘I believe it.’

“At length he was summoned to go down into a part of the yard which is inclosed from the rest of the jail, where the two unhappy convicts and the friends of the Doctor were alone. On his seeing two prisoners looking out of the windows, he went to them, and exhorted them so pathetically, that they both wept abundantly. He said once, ‘I am now a spectacle to men, and shall soon be a spectacle to angels.’

“Just before the sheriff’s officers came with the halters, one who was walking with him told him that there was yet a little solemnity he must pass through before he went out. He asked, ‘What is that?’ ‘You will be bound.’ He looked up, and

said, ' Yet I am free ; my freedom is there,' pointing upwards. He bore it with Christian patience; and beyond what might have been expected ; and when the men offered to excuse tying his hands, he desired them to do their duty, and thanked them for their kindness*. After he was bound, I offered to assist him with my arm in conducting him through the yard, where several people were assembled to see him ; but he replied with seeming pleasure, ' No ! I am as firm as a rock.'—As he passed along the yard, the spectators and prisoners wept and bemoaned him ; and he in return, prayed God to bless them.

" On the way to execution he consoled himself in reflecting and speaking on what Christ had suffered for him ; lamenting the depravity of human nature, which made sanguinary laws necessary ; and said he could gladly have died in the prison yard, as being led out to public execution tended greatly to distress him. He desired me to read to him the 51st psalm, and also pointed out an admirable penitential prayer from Rossell's Prisoner's Director. He prayed again for the king, and likewise for the people.

" When he came near the street where he formerly dwelt, he was much affected, and wept. He said, probably his tears would seem to be the effect of cowardice, but it was a weakness he could not well help ; and added, he hoped he was going to a better home.

" When he arrived at the gallows, he ascended the cart, and spoke to his fellow-sufferer. He then prayed, not only for himself, but also for his wife, and the unfortunate youth that suffered with him ; and declared that he died in the true faith of the gospel of Christ, in perfect love and charity with all mankind, and with thankfulness to his friends, he was launched into eternity, imploring mercy for his soul for the sake of the blessed Redeemer."

His corpse, on the Monday following, was carried to Cowley, in Buckinghamshire, and deposited in the church there."

* It was done in the passage leading to the chapel, by order of Mr. Akerman, the keeper, to prevent his being gazed at ; to whom he desired I would return his sincere thanks for all civilities to him, even to the last.

The following paper was intended to have been read by Mr. Vilette at the place of execution, but was omitted, as it seemed not possible to communicate the knowledge of it to so great a number of persons as were then assembled.

D.

"To the words of dying men regard has always been paid. I am brought hither to suffer death for an act of fraud, of which I confess myself guilty, with shame, such as my former state of life naturally produces, and I hope with such sorrow as He, to whom the heart is known, will not disregard. I repent that I have violated the laws by which peace and confidence are established among men; I repent that I have attempted to injure my fellow-creatures; and I repent that I have brought disgrace upon my order and discredit upon my religion: but my offences against God are without number, and can admit only of general confession and general repentance.—Grant, Almighty God, for the sake of Jesus Christ, that my repentance, however late, however imperfect, may not be in vain!

"The little good that now remains in my power, is to warn others against those temptations by which I have been seduced. I have always sinned against conviction; my principles have never been shaken; I have always considered the Christian religion as a revelation from God, and its divine Author as the Saviour of the world: but the laws of God, though never disowned by me have often been forgotten. I was led astray from religious strictness by the delusion of show and the delights of voluptuousness. I never knew or attended to the calls of frugality, or the needful minuteness of painful economy. Vanity and pleasure, into which I plunged, required expence disproportionate to my income; expence brought distress upon me; and distress, importunate distress, urged me to temporary fraud.

"For this fraud I am to die, and I die declaring, in the most solemn manner, that however I have deviated from my own precepts, I have taught others, to the best of my knowledge, and with all sincerity, the true way to eternal happiness. My life, for some few unhappy years past, has been dreadfully erro-

neous; but my ministry has been always sincere. I have constantly believed, and I now leave the world solemnly avowing my conviction, that there is no other name under heaven by which we can be saved, but only the name of the Lord Jesus; and I entreat all who are here to join with me in my last petition, that, for the sake of that Lord Jesus Christ, my sins may be forgiven, and my soul received into his everlasting kingdom.

“ WILLIAM DODD.”

June 27, 1777.

ADVERTISEMENT

ORIGINALLY PREFIXED TO

THE PRISON THOUGHTS.



THE following Work, as the dates of the respective parts evince, was begun by its unhappy Author in his apartment at Newgate, on the evening of the day subsequent to his trial and conviction at Justice-hall, and was finished, amidst various necessary interruptions, in little more than the space of two months.

Prefixed to the MANUSCRIPT is the ensuing NOTE :

April 23, 1777.

“ I began these thoughts merely from the impression of my mind, without plan, purpose, or motive, more than the situation and state of my soul. I continued them on a thoughtful and regular plan; and I have been enabled wonderfully—in a state, which in better days I should have supposed would have destroyed all power of reflection—to bring them nearly to a conclusion. I dedicate them to God, and to the *reflecting Serious* among my fellow-creatures; and I bless the Almighty for the ability to go through them, amidst the terrors of this dire place, and the bitter anguish of my disconsolate mind !

“ The Thinking will easily pardon all inaccuracies, as I am neither *able* nor *willing* to read over those melancholy lines with a *curious* and *critical* eye. They are imperfect, but the language of the heart; and, had I time and inclination, might and should be improved.

“ But——

W. D.’



The few little pieces subjoined to the *Thoughts*, and the Author's *Last Prayer*, were found amongst his papers. Their evident connection with the Poem was the inducement for adding them to the Volume.

THOUGHTS IN PRISON;

COMMENCED

SUNDAY EVENING, EIGHT O'CLOCK *,

February 23, 1777.



WEEK THE FIRST.

THE IMPRISONMENT.

My friends are gone! Harsh on its sullen hinge
Grates the dread door; the massy bolts respond
Tremendous to the surly keeper's touch.
The dire keys clang, with movement dull and slow,
While their behest the ponderous locks perform:
And fastened firm, the object of their care
Is left to solitude,—to sorrow left.

But wherefore fastened? Oh still stronger bonds

The hour when they lock up in this dismal place,

The Imprisonment.

Than bolts, or locks, or doors of molten brass,
To solitude and sorrow would consign
His anguish'd soul, and prison him, though free !
For, whither should he fly, or where produce
In open day, and to the golden sun,
His hapless head ? whence every laurel torn,
On his bald brow sits grinning Infamy ;
And all in sportive triumph twines around
The keen, the stinging adders of disgrace ?

Yet what's disgrace with man ? or all the stings
Of pointed scorn ? What the tumultuous voice
Of erring multitudes ? Or what the shafts
Of keenest malice, levell'd from the bow
Of human inquisition ?—if the God,
Who knows the heart, looks with complacence down
Upon the struggling victim, and beholds
Repentance bursting from the earth-bent eye,
And faith's red cross held closely to the breast ?

Oh Author of my being ! of my bliss
Beneficent dispenser ! wond'rous power,
Whose eye, all-searching, thro' this dreary gloom
Discerns the deepest secrets of the soul,

The Imprisonment.

Assist me! With thy ray of light divine
Illumine my dark thoughts; upraise my low;
And give me wisdom's guidance, while I strive
Impartially to state the dread account,
And call myself to trial! Trial far
Than that more fearful—though how fearful that
Which trembling late I prov'd! Oh aid my hand
To hold the balance equal, and allow
The few sad moments of remaining life
To retrospection useful! make my end,
As my first wish (thou know'st the heart) has been
To make my whole of being to my friends,
My fellow-pilgrims through this world of woe,
Instructive!—Oh could I conduct but one,
One only with me to our Canaan's rest,
How could I meet my fate, nor think it hard!

Not think it hard?—Burst into tears, my soul;
Gush every pore of my distracted frame,
Gush into drops of blood?—But one; save one,
Or guide to Canaan's rest?—when all thy views
In better days were dedicate alone
To guide, persuade to that celestial rest,

The Imprisonment.

Souls which have listened with devotion's ear
To Sion's songs enchanting from thy lips,
And tidings sweet of Jesu's pardoning love?

But one, save one?—Oh, what a rest is this!
Oh, what a Sabbath in this dungeon's gloom,
This prison-house, meet emblem of the realm
Reserv'd for the ungodly! Hark! methinks
I hear the cheerful melody of praise
And penitential sweetness*! 'Tis the sound,
The well-known sound, to which my soul attun'd
For year succeeding year, hath hearken'd glad,
And still with fresh delight: while all my powers
In blest employ have press'd the saving truths
Of grace divine, and faith's all-conquering might,
On the sure Rock of Ages grounded firm.

Those hours are gone! and here, from heaven shut out,
And heavenly works like these, on this lov'd day,
Rest of my God,—I only hear around

* Referring more immediately to the duty of the Magdalen Chapel.

The Imprisonment.

The dismal clang of chains, the hoarse rough shout
 Of dissonant imprecation, and the cry
 Of misery and vice, in fearful din
 Impetuous mingled ! while my frightened mind
 Shrinks back in horror ; while the scalding tears,
 Involuntarily starting, furrow down
 My sickly cheeks ; and whirling thought, confus'd
 For giddy moments, scarce allows to know
 Or where, or who, or what a wretch I am !

Not know ?—Alas ! too well it strikes my heart ;
 Emphatical it speaks ! while dungeons, chains,
 And bars and bolts, proclaim the mournful truth,
 “ Ah, what a wretch thou art ! how sunk, how fall'n
 “ * From what high state of bliss, into what woe ! ”
 Fall'n from the topmost bough that plays in air
 E'en of the tallest cedar ; where aloft
 Proud happiness her tow'ring eyry built,
 Built, as I dreamt, for ages. Idle dream !
 And yet, amongst the millions of mankind,

The Imprisonment.

Who sleep like me, how few, like me deceiv'd,
Do not indulge the same fantastic dream !

Give me the angel's clarion !—Let me sound
Loud as the blast which shall awake the dead ;
Oh let me sound, and call the slumberers forth
To view the vision which delusion charms ;
To shake the potent incantation off ;
Or ere it burst in ruin on their souls,
As it has burst on mine.—Not on my soul !
Retract the dread idea : Righteous God !
Not on my soul ! Oh thou art gracious all ;
And with an eye of pity from thy throne
Of majesty supernal, thou behold'st
The creatures of thy hand, thy feeble sons,
Struggling with sin, with Satan, and the world,
Their sworn and deadly foes ; and having felt
In human flesh the trials of our kind,
Know'st sympathetic how to aid the tried !

Rock of my hope ! the rash, rash phrase forgive,
Safe is my soul ; nor can it know one fear,
Grounded on Thee Unchangeable ! Thee first,
Thee last, great Cleanser of all human sin !

The Imprisonment.

But though secure the vessel rides in port,
Held firm by faith's strong anchor,—well it suits
The mariner to think by what strange means
Through perils inconceivable he pass'd
Through rocks, sands, pirates, storms, and boisterous
waves,
And happily obtained that port at last.

On these my thoughts are bent, nor deem it wrong,
Minist'ring angels! whose benignant task,
Assign'd by Heaven, is to console distress,
And hold up human hearts amidst the toil
Of human woe *!—Blest spirits, who delight
In sweet, submissive resignation's smile,
To that high will you know for ever right;—
Deem it not wrong, that with a bleeding heart,
I dwell awhile, unworthiest of my race,
On those black rocks, those quicksands, waves, and
storms,
Which in a sea of trouble have engulf'd.

* See Psalm xxxiv. 7. Heb. i. 14.

The Imprisonment.

All, all my earthly comforts ; and have left
 Me, a poor naked, shipwreck'd, suffering wretch,
 On this bleak shore, in this confinement drear,
 At sight of which, in better days, my soul
 Hath started back with horror ! while my friend,
 My bosom-partner in each hour of pain,
 With antidotes preventive kindly arm'd,
 Trembling for my lov'd health, when christian calls
 And zeal for others' welfare, haply brought
 My steps attendant on this den of death !

Oh dismal change ! now not in friendly sort
 A christian visitor, to pour the balm
 Of christian comfort in some wretches ear.—
 I am that wretch myself ! and want, much want,
 The christian consolation I bestow'd,
 So cheerfully bestow'd ! want, want, my God,
 From Thee the mercy, from my fellow-man
 The lenient mercy, which, great Judge of hearts,
 To Thee I make the solemn, sad appeal—
 That mercy which Thou know'st my gladsome soul
 Ever sprang forth with transport to impart !

Why then, mysterious Providence ! pursued

The Imprisonment.

With such unfeeling ardour? why pursued
To death's dread bourn, by men to me unknown?
Why—Stop the deep question; it o'erwhelms my soul;
It reels, it staggers!—Earth turns round!—my brain
Whirls in confusion! my impetuous heart
Throbs with pulsations not to be restrained!
Why?—where?—Oh Chesterfield! my son, my son!

Nay, talk not of composure! I had thought
In olden time, that my weak heart was soft,
And pity's self might break it.—I had thought
That marble-eyed severity would crack
The slender nerves which guide my reins of sense,
And give me up to madness. 'Tis not so:
My heart is callous, and my nerves are tough:
It will not break! they will not crack! or else
What more, just Heaven, was wanting to the deed,
Than to behold—Oh that eternal night
Had in that moment screen'd me from myself!—
My Stanhope to behold! whose filial ear
Drank pleas'd the lore of wisdom from my tongue!
My Stanhope to behold!—Ah piercing sight!
Forget it;—'tis distraction:—Speak who can!

 The Imprisonment.

But I am lost! a criminal adjudg'd!
 A guilty miscreant! Canst thou think, my friend,
 Oh Butler,—'midst a million faithful found!—
 Oh canst thou think, who know'st, who long hast known,
 My inmost soul; oh canst thou think that life,
 From such rude outrage for a moment sav'd,
 And sav'd almost by miracle*, deserves
 The languid wish, or e'er can be sustain'd?

It can—it must! That miracle alone
 To life gives consequence. Oh deem it not
 Presumptuous, that my grateful soul thus rates
 The present high deliverance it hath found;—
 Sole effort of thy wisdom, Sovereign Power,
 Without whose knowledge not a sparrow falls!
 Oh may I cease to live, ere cease to bless
 That interposing hand, which turn'd aside,—
 Nay to my life and preservation turn'd

* Referring to the case reserved for the solemn decision of the twelve Judges; and which gave the prisoner a much longer space than his most sanguine friends could have expected, from the complexion of the process.—See the Sessions Paper for Feb. 1777.

The Imprisonment.

The fatal blow precipitate, ordain'd
To level all my little hopes in dust,
And give me to the grave ! Rather, my hand,
Forget thy cunning !^o Rather shall my tongue
In gloomy silence bury every note
To my glad heart respondent, than I cease
To dedicate to Him who spar'd my life,
Each breath, each power, while he vouchsafes to lend
The precious boon !—To Him be all its praise !
To Him be all its service !^o Long or short,
The gift's the same : to live or die to him^o
Is gain sufficient, everlasting gain ;
And may that gain be mine !—I live, I live !
Ye hours, ye minutes, bounty of his grace,
Fleet not away without improvement due :
Rich on your wings bear penitence and prayer
To Heaven's all-clement Ruler ; and to man
Bear all the retribution man can make !^o
Ye precious hours, ye moments snatch'd from death,
Replete with incense rise,—that my cheer'd soul,
When comes the solemn call, may spring away,
Delighted, to the bosom of its God !

The Imprisonment.

Who shall condemn the trust?—proud rationals,
(That deep in speculation's 'wildering maze
Bemuse themselves with error, and confound
The laws of men, of nature, and of Heav'n)
Presumptuous in their wisdom, dare dethrone
Even from his works the Maker ; and contend
That he who form'd it governs not the world :
While, steep'd in sense's Lethe, sons of earth
From the world's partial picture gaily draw
Their mad conclusions. Bold broad-staring Vice,
Lull'd on the lap of every mundane bliss,
At meek-eyed Virtue's patient suffering scoffs,
And dares with dauntless innocence the God,
Regardless of his votaries !—Vain and blind !
Alike through wisdom or through folly blind—
Whose dim contracted view the petty round,
The mere horizon of the present hour
In darkness terminates !—Oh could I ope
The golden portals of eternal day ;
Pour on your sight the congregated blaze
Of light, of wisdom, bursting from the throne
Of universal glory ; on the round

The Imprisonment.

The boundless cycle of his moral plan,
Who, hid in clouds terrific, Master sits
Of subject men and worlds ; and sees at once
The ample scene of present, future, past,
All naked to his eye of flame,—all rang'd
In harmony complete, to work his will,
And finish with the plaudit of the skies !

But,—while this whelming blazon may not burst
On the weak eyes of mortals ; while confin'd
Thro' dark dim glass, with dark dim sight to look
All trembling to the future, and collect
The scatter'd rays of wisdom ; while referr'd
Our infant reason to the guiding hand
Of faith strong-eyed, which never quits the view
Of Jesus, her great pole-star ! from whose word,
Irradiate with the lustre of his love,
She learns the mighty Master to explore
In all his works ; and from the meanest taught
Beholds the God, the Father,—Scorn ye not,
My fellow-pilgrims, fellow-heirs of death,
And, oh-triumphant thought !—my fellow-heirs
Of life immortal ; if not sold to sense

The Imprisonment.

And infidelity's black cause, you cast
 Ungracious from yourselves the proffer'd boon ;
 —Then scorn not, oh my friends, when Heaven vouch-
 safes

To teach by meanest objects, reptiles, birds,
 To take one lesson from a worm like me !

Proof of a gracious Providence I live ;—
 To him be all the glory ! Of his care
 Paternal, his supporting signal love,
 I live each hour an argument. Away
 The systematic dulness of dispute !
 Away, each doating reasoner ! I feel,
 Feel in my inmost heart the conscious sense,
 The grateful pressure of distinguish'd grace,
 And live, and only wish for life to praise it.

For say, my soul,—nor 'midst this silence sad,
 This midnight, awful, melancholy gloom,
 Nor in this solemn moment of account
 'Twixt thee and Heaven,—when on his altar lies
 A sacrifice thy naked bleeding heart !
 Say, nor self-flattering, to thy conscience hold
 The mirror of deceit: could'st thou have thought

The Imprisonment.

Thy nerves, thy head, thy heart, thy frame, thy sense,
Sufficient to sustain the sudden shock,
Rude as a bursting earthquake, which at once
Toppled the happy edifice adown,
Whelm'd thee and thine beneath its ruinous crash,
And buried all in sorrow?—Torn away
Impetuous from thy home, thy much lov'd home,
Without one moment to reflection giv'n!
By soothing, solemn promise led to place
Ingenuous all thy confidence of life
In men assuming gentle pity's guise!
Vain confidence in ought beneath the sun!
Behold the hour, the dreadful hour arriv'd:
The prison opes its ruthless gates upon thee!

Oh horror! But what's this, this fresh attack!
'Tis she, 'tis she! my weeping, fainting wife!
"And hast thou faithful found me? Has thy love
"Thus burst thro' ev'ry barrier? Hast thou trac'd
"—Deprest in health, and timid as thou art—
"At midnight trac'd the desolate wild streets,
"Thus in a prison's gloom to throw thy arms
"Of conjugal endearment round the neck"

The Imprisonment.

“Of thy lost husband?—Fate, exact thy worst;

“The bitterness is past.”—Idea vain!

To tenfold bitterness drench’d in my deep cup

Of gall the morning rises! Statue-like,

Inanimate, half dead, and fainting half,

To stand a spectacle!—the præter stern

Denying to my pleading tears one pang

Of human sympathy! Conducted forth,

Amidst the unfeeling populace; pursued

Like some deer, which from the hunter’s aim

Hath ta’en its deadly hurt; and glad to find—

Panting with woe,—my refuge in a jail!

Can misery stretch more tight the torturing cord?

But hence this softness! Wherefore thus lament

These petty poor escutcheons of thy fate,

When lies—all worthy of thyself and life,

Cold in the herse of ruin?—Rather turn

Grateful thine eyes, and raise, though red with tears,

To his high throne, who looks on thy distress

With fatherly compassion; kindly throws

Sweet comfort’s mixture in thy cup, and sooths

With Gilead’s balm thy death-wound. He it is

The Imprisonment.

Who, 'midst the shock disrupting, holds in health
Thy shatter'd frame, and keeps thy reason clear ;
He, He it is, whose pitying power supports
Thy humbled soul, deep humbled in the dust,
Beneath the sense of guilt ; the mournful sense
Of deep transgression 'gainst thy fellow-men,
Of sad offence 'gainst Him, thy Father, God ;
Who, lavish in his bounties, woo'd thy heart
With each paternal blessing ;—ah ingrate,
And worthless ! Yet—(His mercies who can count,
Or truly speak his praise !)—Yet through this gloom
Of self-conviction, lowly he vouchsafes
To dart a ray of comfort, like the sun's,
All-cheering through a summer's evening shower !
Arch'd in his gorgeous sky, I view the bow
Of grace fix'd emblem ! 'Tis that grace alone
Which gives my soul its firmness ; builds my hope
Beyond the grave ; and bids me spurn the earth !

First of all blessings, hail ! Yet Thou from whom
Both first and last, both great and small proceed ;
Exhaustless source of every good to man,
Accept for all the tribute of my praise ;

The Imprisonment.

For all are thine !—Thine the ingenuous friends,
Who solace with compassion sweet my woe ;
Mingle with mine their sympathetic tears ;
Incessant and disinterested toil
To work my weal ; and delicately kind,
Watch every keener sensibility
That lives about my soul. Oh, more than friends,
In tenderness my children !—Thine are too
The very keepers of the rugged jail,
—Ill school to learn humanity's soft lore !—
Yet here humanity their duty pays,
Respectably affecting ! Whilst they tend
My little wants, officious in their zeal,
They turn away, and fain would hide the tear
That gushes all unbidden to their eye,
And sanctifies their service.—On their heads
Thy Blessing, Lord of Bounty !—

——But, of all,

All thy choice comforts in this drear distress,
God of our first young love ! Thine is the Wife,
Who with assiduous care, from night to morn,
From morn to night, watches my every need ;

The Imprisonment.

And, as in brightest days of peace and joy,
Smiles on my anguish, while her own poor breast
Is full almost to bursting ! Prostrate, Lord,
Before thy footstool—Thou, whose highest style
On earth, in heaven, is Love !—Thou, who hast breath'd
Through human hearts the tender charities,
The social fond affections which unite
In bonds of sweetest amity those hearts,
And guide to every good !—Thou, whose kind eye
Complacent must behold the rich, ripe fruit,
Mature and mellow'd on the generous stock
Of thy own careful planting !—Low on earth,
And mingled with my native dust, I cry ;
With all the Husband's anxious fondness cry ;
With all the friend's solicitude and truth ;
With all the teacher's fervour,—“ God of Love,
“ Vouchsafe thy choicest comforts on her head !
“ Be thine my fate's decision : To thy will
“ With angel-resignation, lo ! we bend !”

But hark ! what sound, wounding the night's dull ear,
Bursts sudden on my sense, and makes more horrible

The Imprisonment.

These midnight horrors?—'Tis the solemn bell,
Alarum to the prisoners of death*!

Hark! what a groan, responsive from the cells
Of condemnation, calls upon my heart,
My thrilling heart, for intercession strong,
And pleadings in the sufferer's behalf—
My fellow-sufferers, and my fellow-men!

Cease then awhile the strain, my plaintive soul,
And veil thy face of sorrow! Lonely hours
Soon will return thee to thy midnight task,
For much remains to sing; sad themes, unsung,
As deem'd perchance too mournful;—yet, what else
Than themes like these can suit a muse like mine?
—And might it be, that while ingenuous woe
Bleeds through my verse; while the succeeding page,

* This alludes to a very striking and awful circumstance. The bellman of St. Sepulchre's, near the prison, is, by long and pious custom, appointed to announce at midnight to the condemned criminals in their cells, *That the hour of their departure is at hand!*

The Imprisonment.

Weaving with my sad story the detail'
Of crimes, of punishments, of prisons drear,
Of present life and future,—sad discourse
And serious shall contain! Oh might it be,
That human hearts may listen and improve!
Oh might it be, that benefit to souls
Flow from the weeping tablet; though the Man
In torture die, the Painter shall rejoice!

Sunday, March 2, 1777.

END OF THE FIRST WEEK.

THOUGHTS IN PRISON ;

SUNDAY, MARCH 2, 1777.



WEEK THE SECOND.

THE RETROSPECT.

OH, not that thou goest hence—sweet drooping flower,
Surcharg'd with Sorrow's dew !—Not that thou quitt'st
This pent and feverish gloom, which beams with light,
With health, with comfort, by thy presence cheer'd,
Companion of my life, and of my woes
Blest soother ! Not that thou goest hence to drink .
A purer air, and gather from the breath
Of balmy spring new succour, to recruit
Thy waning health, and aid thee to sustain,
With more than manly fortitude, thy own
And my afflictive trials ! Not that here,
Amidst the glories of this genial day.

The Retrospect.

Immur'd, through iron bars I peep at Heaven
With dim, lack-lustre eye!—Oh, 'tis not this
That drives the poison'd point of torturous thought
Deep to my spring of life! It is not this
That prostrate lays me weeping in the dust,
And draws in sobs the life-blood from my heart!

Well could I bear thy absence: well, full well;
Though angel-comforts in thy converse smile,
And make my dungeon Paradise! Full well
Could I sustain through iron bars to view
The golden Sun, in bridegroom-majesty
Taking benignant Nature to his love,
And decking her with bounties! Well, very well
Could I forego the delicate delight
Of tracing nature's germens as they bud;
Of viewing spring's first children as they rise
In innocent sweetness, or beneath the thorn
In rural privacy, or on gay parterre
More artful, less enchanting!—Well, very well
Could I forego to listen,—in this house
Of unremitted din,—and nought complain;
To listen as I oft have stood with thee,

The Retrospect.

Listening in fond endearment to the voice,
Of stock-dove, through the silence of the wood
Hoarse murmuring!—Well, oh could I forego,
These innocent, though exquisite delights,
Still new, and to my bosom still attun'd
In moral, mental melody!—Sweet Spring!
Well could I bear this sad exile from thee,
Nor drop one tear reluctant; for my soul,
Strong to superior feelings, soars aloft
To eminence of misery!—Confin'd
On this blest day—the Sabbath of my God!
—Not from his house alone, not from the power
Of joyful worship with assembling crowds*,
But from the labours once so amply mine,
The labours of his love. Now, laid aside,
Cover'd my head with ignominious dust,
My voice is stopp'd; and had I ev'n the power,
Strong shame, and stronger grief would to that voice
Forbid all utterance!—Ah, thrice hapless voice,
By Heaven's own finger all-indulgent tun'd

* See Psalm lxxxiv.

The Retrospect.

To touch the heart, and win th' attentive soul
To love of truth divine, how useless now,
How dissonant, unstrung!—Like Salem's harps,
Once fraught with richest harmony of praise,
Hung in sad silence by Euphrates' stream,
Upon the mournful willows! There they wept,
Thy captive people wept, O God!—when thought
To bitter memory recall'd the songs,
The dulcet songs of Sion! Oh blest songs,
Transporting chorus of united hearts,
In cheerful music mounting to the praise
Of Sion's King of Glory!—Oh the joy
Transcendant, of petitions wing'd aloft
With fervour irresistible, from throngs
Assembled in thy earthly courts, dread King
Of all-dependant nature!—looking up
For all to Thee, as do the servants eyes,
Up to their fostering master! Joy of joys,
Amidst such throng'd assemblies to stand forth,
To blow the Silver Trumpet of thy Grace,
The gladsome year of jubilee to proclaim,
And offer to the aching sinner's heart

The Retrospect.

Redemption's healing mercies ! And methinks,
 (—Indulge the pleasing reverie, my soul !
 The waking dream, which in oblivion sweet
 Lulls thy o'erlabour'd sense !) methinks convey'd
 To Ham's lov'd shades,—dear favourite shades, by peace
 And pure religion sanctify'd,—I hear
 The tuneful bells their hallow'd message sound
 To Christian hearts symphonious ! Circling time
 Once more hath happily brought round the day
 Which calls us to the temple of our God :
 Then let us haste, in decent neatness clad,
 My cheerful little household, to his courts,
 So lov'd, so truly honour'd ! There we'll mix
 In meek, ingenuous deprecation's cry ;
 There we'll unite in full thanksgiving's choir,
 And all the rich melodiousness of praise.

I feel, I feel the rapture ! David's harp
 Concordant with a thousand voices sounds :
 Prayer mounts exulting : Man ascends the skies
 On wings of angel-fervour ! Holy writ
 Or speaks the wonders of Jehovah's power,
 Or tells in more than mortal majesty,

 The Retrospect.

The greater wonders of his love to man !
 Proofs of that love, see where the mystic signs,
 High emblems of unutterable grace,
 Confirm to man the zeal of Heaven to save,
 And call to gratitude's best office !

 Wise

In all thy sacred institutions, Lord,
 Thy Sabbaths with peculiar wisdom shine ;
 First and high argument, creation done,
 Of thy benign solicitude for man,
 Thy ~~chiefest, favourite creature~~ Time is thine ;
 How just to claim a part, who giv'st the whole !
 But oh, how gracious, to assign that part
 To man's supreme behoof, his soul's best good ;
 His mortal and his ~~mental~~ benefit ;
 His body's genial comfort ! Savage else,
 Untaught, undisciplin'd, in shaggy pride
 He'd rovd the wild, amidst the brutes a brute
 Ferocious ; to the soft civilities
 Of cultivated life, Religion, Truth,
 A barbarous stranger. To thy Sabbaths then
 All hail, wise Legislator ! 'Tis to these

The Retrospect.

We owe at once the memory of thy works,
 Thy mighty works of nature and of grace ;—
 We owe divine religion : and to these
 The decent comeliness of social life.

Revere, ye earthly magistrates, who wield
 The sword of Heaven,—the wisdom of Heaven's plan,
 And sanctify the Sabbath of your God !
 Religion's all : With that or stands or falls
 Your country's weal ! but where shall she obtain,
 —Religion, sainted pilgrim,—shelter safe
 Or honourable greeting :—through the land,
 If led by high and low, in giddy dance,
 Mad profanation on the sacred day
 Of God's appointed rest, her revel-rout
 Insulting heads, and leaves the temple void ?
 —Oh, my lov'd country ! oh, ye thoughtless great,
 Intoxicate with draughts, that opium-like
 For transient moments stupify the mind
 To wake in horrors, and confusion wild !—

But soft, and know thyself ! 'Tis not for thee,
 Poor destitute ! thus grovelling in the dust
 Of self-annihilation, to assume

The Retrospect.

The Censor's office, and reprove mankind.

Ah me,—thy day of duty is declin'd !

Thou rather, to the quick probe thine own wounds,

And plead for mercy at the judgment seat,

Where conscience smites thee for th' offence deplor'd.

Yet not presumptuous deem it, Arbiter
Of human thoughts, that through the long, long gloom
Of multiply'd transgressions, I behold

Complacent smiling on my sickening soul,

“ Delight in thy lov'd Sabbaths ! ”—Well thou know'st—

For thou know'st all things,—that the cheerful sound

Of that blest day's return, for circling weeks,

For months, for years, for more than trice seven years,

Was music to my heart ! My feet rejoic'd

To bear me to thy temples, haply fraught

With Comfort's tidings ; with thy gospel's truth,

The gospel of thy peace ! Oh, well thou know'st,

Who knowest all things, with what welcome toil,

What pleasing assiduity I search'd

Thy heavenly word, to learn thy heavenly will ;

That faithful I might minister its truth,

And of the high commission nought kept back

The Retrospect.

From the great congregation * ! Well thou know'st,
—Sole, sacred witness of my private hours,—
How copiously I bath'd with pleading tears,
How earnestly in prayer consign'd to Thee
The humble efforts of my trembling pen ;
My best, weak efforts in my Master's cause ;
Weak as the feather 'gainst the giant's shield,
Light as the gosmer floating on the wind,
Without thy aid omnipotent ! Thou know'st
How, anxious to improve in every grace,
That best to man's attention might commend
Th' important message, studious I apply'd
My feeble talents to the holy art
Of 'suasive elocution ; emulous
Of every acquisition which might clothe
In purest dignity the purest work,
The first, the highest office man can bear,
“ The messenger of God ! ” And well thou know'st,
—For all the work, as all the praise is thine—
What sweet success accompanied the toil ;

* Psalm xl. ver. 10.

The Retrospect.

What harvests bless'd the seed-time ! Well thou know'st
With what triumphant gladness my rapt soul
Wrought in the vineyard ! how it thankful bore
The noon-day's heat, the evening's chilly frost,
Exulting in its much-lov'd Master's cause
To spend, and to be spent ! and bring it home
From triple labours of the well-toil'd day,
A body by fatigue o'erborne ; a mind
Replete with glad emotions to its God !
Ah, my lov'd household ! ah, my little round
Of social friends ! well do you bear in mind °
Those pleasing evenings, when, on my return,
Much-wish'd return—serenity the mild,
And cheerfulness the innocent, with me
Enter'd the happy dwelling ! Thou, my Ernest,
Ingenuous youth ! whose early spring bespoke
Thy summer, as it is, with richest crops
Luxuriant waving ; gentle youth, canst thou
Those welcome hours forget ? or thou—oh thou !
—How shall I utter from my beating heart
Thy name, so musical, so heavenly sweet
Once to these ears distracted !—Stanhope,* say,

The Retrospect.

Canst thou forget those hours, when, cloth'd in smiles
 Of fond respect, thou and thy friend have strove
 Whose little hands should readiest supply
 My willing wants; officious in your zeal
 To make the Sabbath evenings, like the day,
 A scene of sweet composure to my soul * !
 Oh happy Sabbaths!—Oh my soul's delight!
 Oh days of matchless mercy! matchless praise!
 Gone, gone, for ever gone! How dreadful spent,
 Useless, in tears, and groans, and bitter woe,
 In this wild place of horrors †! Oh, return,
 Ye happy Sabbaths!—or to that lov'd realm
 Dismiss me, Father of compassions, where
 Reigns one eternal Sabbath! Though my voice,
 Feeble at best, be damp'd, and cannot soar

* Good Friday, Easter, &c. once so peculiarly happy—
 yet how past here!—What a sad want of the spirit of re-
 formation!

† Boethius has a reflection highly applicable to the sense
 of our Author: "*Nec inficiari possum prosperitatis meæ ve-
 locissimum cursum. Sed hoc est, quod recolentem me vehemen-
 tius coquit. Nam in omni adversitate fortunæ, infelicissimum
 genus est infortunii, fuisse felicem.*" *De Consol.* L. 2. Pros. 4.

 The Retrospect.

To strains sublime, beneath the sorrowing sense
 Of base ingratitude to thee, my God,
 My Father, Benefactor, Saviour, Friend,—
 Yet in that realm of rest 'twill quickly catch
 Congenial harmony! 'twill quickly rise,
 Even from humility's weak, trembling touch;
 Rise with the glowing Seraph in the choir,
 And strive to be the loudest in thy praise.

Too soaring thought! that in a moment sunk
 By sad reflection and convicting guilt,
 Falls prostrate on the earth.—So, pois'd in air,
 And warbling his wild notes about the clouds,
 Almost beyond the ken of human sight;
 Clapp'd to his side his plummy steerage, down
 Drops—instantaneous drops the silent lark!

How shall I mount to Heaven? how join the choir
 Celestial of bright Seraphim? deprest
 Beneath the burden of a thousand sins,
 On what blest dove-like wing shall I arise,
 And fly to the wish'd rest?

—Of counsel free,
 Some to my aching heart, with kind intent,

The Retrospect.

Offer the poisonous balsam of desert ;
“ Bid me take comfort from the cheering view
“ Of deeds benevolent, and active life
“ Spent for the weal of others !” Syren-songs,
Soon hush'd by howlings of severe reproach,
Unfeeling, uncompassionate, and rude,
Which o'er my-body, panting on the earth,
With wounds incurable, insulting, whirls
Her iron scourge : accumulates each ill
That can to man's best fame damnation add ;
Spies not one mark of white throughout my life ;
And, groaning o'er my anguish to despair,
As my soul, sad resource, indignant points !

But not from you,—ah cruel, callous foes,
Thus to exult and press a fallen man !—
Nor even from you, though kind, mistaken friends,
Admit we counsel here. Too deep the stake,
Too awful the inquiry—how the soul
May smile at death, and meet its God in peace—
To rest the answer on uncertain man !
Alike above your friendship or your hate,
Here, here I tour triumphant, and behold

The Retrospect.

At once confirm'd security and joy,
Beyond the reach of mortal hand to shake,
Or for a moment cloud.—Hail, bleeding Love !
In thy humiliation deep and dread,
Divine Philanthropist, my ransom'd soul
Beholds its triumph, and avows its cure,
Its perfect, free salvation ! knows or feels
No merit, no dependence, but thy faith,
Thy hope and love consummate ! All abjures ;
Casts all,—each care, each burden, at the foot
Of thy victorious cross : is heart and life
One wish, one word uniting—ever may
That wish and word in me, blest Lord, unite !—
“ Oh, ever may in me Thy will be done ! ”

Firm and unshaken, as old Sion's Hill,
Remains this sure foundation : who on Christ,
The Corner-Stone, build faithful, build secure,
Eternity is theirs. Then talk no more,
Ye airy, vague, fantastic reasoners,
Of the light stubble, crackling in the fire
Of Gcd's investigation ; of the chaff
Dispers'd and floating 'fore the slightest wind,—

The Retrospect.

The chaff of human merit ! gracious God !
What pride, what contradiction in the term ;
Shall man, vain man, drest in a little power
Deriv'd from Nature's Author ; and that power
Holding, an humble tenant, at the will
Of him who freely gave it ; His high will,
The dread Supreme Disposer, shall poor man,
A beggar indigent and vile,—enrich'd
With every precious faculty of soul,
Of reason, intellect ; with every gift
Of animal life luxuriant, from the store
Of unexhausted bounty ; shall he turn
That bounty to abuse ; lavish defy
The Giver with his gifts,—a rebel base !
And yet, presumptuous, arrogant, deceiv'd,
Assume a pride for actions not his own,
Or boast of merit, when his all's for God,
And he that all has squander'd ? Purest saints,
Brightest archangels, in the choir of heav'n,
Fulfilling all complete his holy will,
Who plac'd them high in glory as they stand,
Fulfil but duty ! nay, as owing more

The Retrospect.

From love's supreme distinction, readier veil
Their radiant faces with their golden plumes,
And fall more humbled 'fore the throne they hymn
With gratitude superior. Could bold pride
One moment whisper to their lucid souls
Desert's intolerable folly,—down,
Like Lucifer, the morning star, they'd fall
From their bright state obscur'd ! Then, proud, poor
worm,

Conceiv'd in sins, offending from thy youth,
In every point transgressor of the law
Of righteousness, of merit towards God,
Dream, if thou canst ; or, madman if thou art,
Stand on that plea for heav'n—and be undone !

Blest be thy tender mercy, God of Grace !
That 'midst the terrors of this trying hour,
When in this midnight, lonely, prison gloom,
My inmost soul hangs naked to thy view ;
When, undissemol'd in the search, I fain
Would know, explore, and balance every thought ;
(For oh, I see, Eternity's dread gates
Expand before me, soon perhaps to close !—)

The Retrospect.

Blest be thy mercy, that, subdued to thee,
Each lofty vain imagination bows ;
Each high idea humbled in the dust,
Of self-sufficient righteousness, my soul
Disclaims, abhors, with reprobation full,
The slightest apprehension !—worthless, Lord,
Even of the meanest crumb beneath thy board.

Blest be thy mercy, that, so far from due,
I own thy bounties, manifold and rich,
Upon my soul have laid a debt so deep,
That I can never pay !—And oh ! I feel
Compunction inexpressible, to think
How I have us'd those bounties ! sackcloth-clad,
And cover'd o'er with ashes, I deplore
My utter worthlessness ; and, trembling, own
Thy wrath and just displeasure, well might sink
In deeper floods than these, that o'er my head
Roar horrible, in fiery floods of woe,
That know nor end nor respite ! but my God,
Blest be thy mercy ever ! Thou'st not left
My soul to Desperation's dark dismay ;
On Calvary's Hill my mourning eye discerns,

The Retrospect.

With faith's clear view, that Spectacle which wipes
Each tear away, and bids the heart exult!
There hangs the love of God! There hangs of man
The ransom; there the Merit; there the Cure
Of human grief—The Way, the Truth, the Life!

O thou, for sin burnt-sacrifice complete!
Oh Thou, of holy life th' exemplar bright!
Perfection's lucid mirror! while to Thee
Repentance scarce dare lift her flowing eyes,
Though in his strong arms manly Faith supports
The self-convicted mourner!—Let not love,
Source of thy matchless mercies, aught delay,
Like Mary, with Humility's meek hand
Her precious box of costly Nard to pour
On thy dear feet, diffusing through the house
The odour of her unguents! Let not love,
Looking with Gratitude's full eye to Thee,
Cease with the hallow'd fragrance of her works
To cheer thy lowliest members; to refresh
Thee in thy saints afflicted! Let not love,
Cease with each spiritual grace, each temper mild,
Fruits of the Holy Spirit,—to enrich,

The Retrospect.

To fill, perfume, and sanctify the soul
Assimilate to Thee, sweet Jesu! Thee
That soul's immortal habitant. How blest,
How beyond value rich the privilege,
To welcome such a Guest! how doubly blest
With such a signature,—the royal stamp
Of thy resemblance, Prince of Righteousness,
Of Mercy, Peace, and Truth! Oh more and more
Transform me to that Image! More and more
Thou New Creation's Author, form complete
In me the birth divine; the heavenly mind,
The love consummate,—all-performing love,
Which dwelt in Thee, its Pattern and its Source;
And is to man, happy regenerate man,
Heaven's surest foretaste, and its earnest too.

The thought delights and cheers, though not elates:
Through pensive Meditation's sable gloom
It darts a ray of soft, well-temper'd light,
A kind of lunar radiance on my soul,
Gentle, not dazzling! Thou who knowest all,
Know'st well, thrice gracious Master! that my heart
Attun'd to thy dear love, howe'er seduc'd

The Retrospect.

By worldly adulation from its vows,
And for a few contemptible, contemn'd
Unhappy moments faithless ; well thou know'st
That heart ne'er knew true peace but in thy love :
That heart hath in thy love known thorough peace ;
Hath frequent panted for that love's full growth ;
And sought occasions to display its warmth
By deeds of kindness, mild humanity,
And pitying mercy to its fellow-men !

And thou hast blest me ! and I will rejoice
That thou hast blest me ! thou hast giv'n my soul
The Luxury of Luxuries, to wipe
The tear from many an eye ; to stop the groan
At many an aching heart. And thou wilt wipe
The tears from mine, and thou the groan repress :
And thou,—for oh, this beating heart is thine,
Fram'd by thy hand to pity's quickest touch,—
Thou wilt forgive the sinner ; and bestow
Mercy, sweet mercy ! which, inspir'd by thee,
He never had the power, and ne'er the will,
To hold from others where he could bestow !
Shall he not then rest happily secure

The Retrospect.

Of mercy, thrice blest mercy from mankind?
Where rests it?—Resignation's meek-ey'd power
Sustain me still; Composure still be mine:
Where rests it?—Oh mysterious Providence!
Silence the wild idea:—I have found
No mercy yet; no mild humanity:
With cruel unrelenting rigour torn,
And, lost in prison, wild to all below!

So from his daily toil, returning late
O'er Grison's rugged mountains, clad in snow,
The peasant with astonish'd eyes beholds
A gaunt wolf, from the pine-grove howling rush;
Chill horror stiffens him, alike to fly
Unable, to resist; the monster feeds
Blood-happy, growling, on his quivering heart!
Meanwhile light blazes in his lonely cot
The crackling hearth; his careful wife prepares
Her humble cates; and through the lattic'd light
His little ones, expecting his return,
Peep, anxious! Ah, poor victim, he nor hearth
Bright blazing, nor the housewife's humble cates,
Nor much-lov'd children, henceforth more shall see!

The Retrospect.

But soft : 'Tis calm reflection's midnight hour ;
'Tis the soul's solemn inquest. Broods a thought
Resentful in thy bosom ? Art thou yet,
Penitent Pilgrim, on earth's utmost bourn;
And candidate for Heaven,—Art thou yet,
In love imperfect ? and has malice place,
With dark revenge, and unforgiving hate,
Hell's blackest offspring ?—Glory to my God !
With triumph let me sing, and close my strain.

Abhorrent ever from my earliest youth
Of these detested passions, in this hour,
This trying hour of keen oppressive grief,
My soul superior rises ; nor of these
Malevolent, a touch, the slightest touch
Feels, or shall ever harbour ! Though it feels
In all their amplitude, with all their weight,
Ungentlest treatment, and a load of woe,
Heavy as that which fabling poets lay
On proud Enceladus ? Though life be drawn
By Cruelty's fierce hand down to the lees,
Yet can my heart with all the truth of prayer,
With all the fervour of sincere desire,

The Retrospect.

Looking at Thee, thou love of God and man ;

Yet can my heart in life or death implore,

“ Father, forgive them, as Thou pitiest me !”

Oh, where's the wonder, when thy cross is seen !

Oh, where's the wonder, when thy voice is heard ?

Harmonious intercession ! Son of God !

Oh, where's the wonder—or the merit where,

Or what's the task to love-attuned souls—

Poor fellow-creatures pitying, to implore

Forgiveness for them ? Oh forgive my foes !

Best friends, perchance, for they may bring to Thee !

—Complete forgiveness on them, God of Grace !

Complete forgiveness, in the dreadful hour,

When most they need forgiveness ! And oh ! such

As in that dreadful hour, my poor heart wants,

And trust, great Father, to receive from Thee,

Such full forgiveness grant ;—and my glad soul

Shall fold them then, my brethren, in thy house !

Thus do I sooth, and while away with song

My lonely hours in drear confinement past,

Like thee, oh gallant Raleigh !—or like thee,

My hapless ancestor, fam'd Overbury !

The Retrospect.

But oh, in this how different is our fate !
Thou to a vengeful woman's subtle wiles
A hapless victim fall'st ; while my deep gloom,
Brighten'd by female virtue, and the light
Of conjugal affection—leads me oft,
Like the poor prison'd linnet, to forget
Freedom, and tuneful friends, and russet heath,
Vocal with native melody ; to swell
The feeble throat, and chant the lowly strain
As in the season, when from spray to spray
Flew liberty on light elastic wing.
She flies no more :—Be mute my plaintive lyre !

March 15, 1777.

END OF THE SECOND WEEK,

THOUGHTS IN PRISON;

MARCH 18, 1777.



WEEK THE THIRD.

PUBLIC PUNISHMENT.

VAIN are thy generous efforts, worthy Bull*,
Thy kind compassion's vain! The hour is come:
Stern fate demands compliance: I must pass
Through various deaths, keen torturing, to arrive
At that my heart so fervently implores;
Yet fruitless. Ah! why hides he his fell front
From woe, from wretchedness, that with glad smiles
Would welcome his approach; and tyrant-like,
Delights to dash the jocund roseatè cup

* Frederick Bull, Esq. Alderman of London; to whose kindness and humanity the Author has expressed the highest obligations.

Public Punishment.

From the full hand of gaudy luxury
And unsuspecting ease ! Far worse than death
That prison's entrance, whose idea chills
With freezing horror all my curdling blood ;
Whose very name, stamping with infamy,
Makes my soul frightened start, in frenzy whirl'd,
And verging near to madness ! See, they ope
Their iron jaws ! See the vast gates expand,
Gate after gate—and in an instant twang,
Clos'd by their growling keepers ; when again,
Mysterious powers !—oh when to open on me ?
Mercy, sweet Heaven, support my faltering steps,
Support my sickening heart ! My full eyes swim !
O'er all my frame distils a cold damp sweat !
Hark—what a rattling din ! on every side
The congregated chains clank frightful : Throngs
Tumultuous press around, to view, to gaze
Upon the wretched stranger ; scarce believ'd
Other than visitor within such walls,
With mercy and with freedom in his hands.
Alas, how chang'd ! Sons of confinement, see
No pitying deliverer, but a wretch—

Public Punishment.

O'erwhelm'd with misery, more hapless far
Than the most hapless 'mongst ye ; loaded hard
With guilt's oppressive irons ! His are chains
No time can loosen, and no hand unbind :
Fetters which gore the soul. Oh horror, horror !
Ye massive bolts, give way : ye sullen doors,
Ah, open quick, and from this clamorous rout,
Close in my dismal, lone, allotted room
Shrowd me ;—for ever shrowd from human sight,
And make it, if 'tis possible, my grave !

How truly welcome, then ! Then would I greet
With hallow'd joy the drear, but blest abode ;
And deem it far the happiest I have known,
The best I e'er inhabited. But alas !
There's no such mercy for me. I must run
Misery's extremest round ; and this must be
A while my living grave ; the doleful tomb,
Sad sounding with my unremitted groans,
And moisten'd with the bitterness of tears !

Ah, mournful dwelling ! destin'd ne'er to see
The human face divine in placid smiles,
And innocent gladness cloth'd ; destin'd to hear

Public Punishment.

No sounds of genial heart-reviving joy !
The sons of sorrow only are thy guests,
And thine the only music of their sighs,
Thick sobbing from the tempest of their breasts !
Ah, mournful dwelling ! never hast thou seen,
Amidst the numerous wretched ones immur'd
Within thy stone-girt compass, wretch so sunk,
So lost, so ruin'd, as the man who falls
Thus in deep anguish, on thy ruthless floor,
And baths it with the torrent of his tears.

And can it be ? or is it all a dream ?
A vapour of the mind ?—I scarce believe
Myself awake or acting. Sudden thus
Am I—so compass'd round with comforts late,
Health, freedom, peace, torn, torn from all and lost !
A prisoner in—Impossible !—I sleep !
'Tis fancy's coinage ! 'tis a dream's delusion !

Vain dream ! vain fancy ! Quickly I am rous'd
To all the dire reality's distress ;
I tremble, start, and feel myself awake,
Dreadfully awake to all my woes ; and roll
From wave to wave on Sorrow's ocean toss'd !

Public Punishment.

Oh for a moment's pause,—a moment's rest,
To calm my hurried spirits! to recal
Reflection's staggering pilot to the helm,
And still the maddening whirlwind in my soul!
—It cannot be! The din increases round:
Rough voices rage discordant; dreadful shrieks;
Hoarse imprecations dare the Thunderer's ire,
And call down swift damnation! thousand chains
In dismal notes clink, mirthful! Roaring bursts
Of loud obstreperous laughter, and strange choirs
Of gutturals, dissonant and rueful, vex
Ev'n the dull ear of midnight! Neither rest,
Nor peaceful calm, nor silence of the mind,
Refreshment sweet, nor interval or pause
From morn to eve, from eve to morn is found
Amidst the surges of this troubled sea*!

* It is but a just tribute to Mr. Ackerman, the keeper of this dismal place, to observe, that all the evils here enumerated are the immediate consequences of promiscuous confinement, and no way chargeable to Mr. A.'s account. It is from the strictest observation, I am persuaded, that no man could do

 Public Punishment.

So, from the Leman Lake th' impetuous Rhone
 His blue waves pushes rapid, and bears down
 Furiate to meet Saone's pellucid stream,
 (With roar tremendous, through the craggy straits
 Of Alpine rocks) his freight of waters wild :
 Still rushing in perturbed eddies on ;
 And still from hour to hour, from age to age,
 In conflux vast and unremitting, pours -
 His boisterous flood to old Lugdunim's wall !

Oh my rack'd brain—oh my distracted heart !
 The tumult thickens : wild disorder grows
 More painfully confus'd !—And can it be ?
 Is this the mansion—this the house ordain'd
 For recollection's solemn purpose !—this
 The place from whence full many a flitting soul
 (The work of deep repentance—mighty work,

more in the present circumstances. His attention is great, and his kindness and humanity to those in sickness or affliction peculiarly pleasing. I can bear testimony to many signal instances, which I have remarked since my sad confinement.

Public Punishment.

Still, still to be perform'd) must mount to God,
And give its dread account ! Is this the place
Ordain'd by justice, to confine a while
The foe to civil order, and return .
Reform'd and moraliz'd to social life !
This den of drear confusion, wild uproar,
Of mingled riot and unblushing vice !
This school of infamy ! from whence, improv'd
In every hardy villany, returns
More harden'd, more a foe to God and man,
The miscreant, nurs'd in its infectious lap,
All cover'd with its pestilential spots,
And breathing death and poison wheresoe'er
He stalks contagious ! from the lion's den
A lion more ferocious as confin'd !

Britons, while sailing in the golden barge
Of giddy dissipation, on the stream,
Smooth silver stream of gorgeous luxury,
Boast gaily—and for ages may they boast,
And truly ; for through ages we may trust
'Twill interpose between our crimes and God,
And turn away his just avenging scourge—

Public Punishment.

“The national Humanity!” Hither then,
Ye sons of pity, and ye sons of thought!—
Whether by public zeal and patriot love,
Or by Compassion’s gentle stirrings wrought,
Oh hither’come, and find sufficient scope
For all the patriot’s, all the Christian’s search!
Some great, some salutary plan to frame,
Turning confinement’s curses into good;
And, like the God who but rebukes to save,
Extracting comfort from correction’s stroke!

Why do we punish? Why do penal laws
Coercive, by tremendous sanctions bind
Offending mortals?—Justice on her throne
Rigid on this hand to example points;
More mild to reformation upon that:
—She balances, and finds no ends but these.

Crowd then, along with yonder revel-rout,
To exemplary punishment, and mark
The language of the multitude, obscene,
Wild, blasphemous, and cruel! Tens their looks
Of madding, drunken, thoughtless, ruthless gaze,
Of giddy curiosity and vain!

Public Punishment.

Their deeds still more emphatic, note ; and see
By the sad spectacle unimpress'd, they dare
Even in the eye of death, what to their doom
Brought their expiring fellows ! Learn we hence,
How to example's salutary end
Our justice sagely ministers ! But one,—
Should there be one—thrice hapless,—of a mind
By guilt unharden'd, and above the throng
Of desperate miscreants, through repeated crimes
In stupor lull'd, and lost to every sense ;—
Ah me, the sad reverse ! should there be one
Of generous feelings ; whom remorseless fate,
Pallid necessity, or chill distress,
The family's urgent call, or just demand
Of honest creditor,—(solicitudes
To reckless, pamper'd worldlings all unknown)
Should there be one, whose trembling, frighted hand,
Causes like these in temporary guilt,
Abhorrent to his inmost soul, have piung'd,
And made obnoxious to the rigid law !
Sentenc'd to pay,—and, wearied with its weight,
Well-pleas'd to pay with life that law's demand ;

Public Punishment.

Awful dispensers of strict justice, say,
Would ye have more than life? or, in an age,
A country, where humanity reverts
At torture's bare idea, would you tear
Worse than on racking wheels a soul like this,
And make him of the stupid crowd a gaze
For lingering hours?—drag him along to death
An useless spectacle; and more than slay
Your living victim?—Death is your demand:
Death your law's sentence: then this life is yours:
Take the just forfeit; you can claim no more!

Foe to my infidelity,—and griev'd
That he avows not, from the Christian source,
The first great Christian duty, which so well,
So forcibly he paints!—Yet let me greet
With heart-felt gratulations thy warm zeal,
Successful in that sacred duty's cause,
The cause of our humanity, Voltaire!
Torture's vile agents trembling at thy pen:
Intolerance and persecution gnash
Their teeth, despairing at the lucid rays
Of truth all prevalent, beaming from thy page

Public Punishment.

The rack, the wheel, the dungeon, and the flame,
In happier Europe useless and unknown;
Shall soon,—oh speed the hour, Compassion's God,
Be seen no more ; or seen as prodigies,
Scarce credited, of Gothic barbarous times.

Ah, gallant France, for milder manners fam'd,
How wrung it my sad soul, to view expos'd
On instruments of torture—mangled limbs
And bleeding carcasses, beside thy roads,
Thy beauteous woods and avenues ! Fam'd works,
And worthy well the grandeur of old Rome !

We, too, who boast of gentler laws, reform'd
And civiliz'd by liberty's kind hand ;
Of mercy boast, and mildest punishments :
Yet punishments of torture exquisite
And idle ;—painful, ruinous parade !
We, too, with Europe humaniz'd, shall drop
The barbarous severity of death,
Example's bane, not profit ; shall abridge
The savage base ovation ; shall assign
The wretch, whose life is forfeit to the laws,
With all the silent dignity of woe,

Public Punishment.

With all the mournful majesty of death,
Retir'd and solemn, to his awful fate !
Shall to the dreadful moment, moment still
To souls best fitted, give distinction due ;
Teach the 'well-order'd sufferer to depart
With each impression serious ; nor insult
With clamorous crowds and exultations base,
A soul, a fellow-soul, which stands prepar'd
On time's dread verge to take its wondrous flight,
To realms of immortality ! Yes, the day
—I joy in the Idea,—will arrive,
When Britons philanthropic shall reject
The cruel custom, to the sufferer cruel,
Useless and baneful to the gaping crowd !
The day will come, when life, the dearest price
Man can pay down, sufficient forfeit deem'd
For guilty man's transgression of the law,
Shall be paid down, as meet for such a price
Respectful, sad ; with reverence to a soul's
Departure hence ; with reverence to the soul's
And body's separation, much-lov'd friends !
Without a torture to augment its loss,

 Public Punishment.

Without an insult to molest its calm ;
 To the demanded debt no fell account
 Of curious, hissing ignominy annex'd ;
 Anguish, beyond the bitterest torture keen ;
 Unparallel'd in realms where bigotry
 Gives to the furious sons of Dominic
 Her sable flag, and marks their way with blood.

Hail, milder sons of Athens ! civiliz'd
 By arts ingenious, by the 'suasive power
 Of humanizing science : well ye thought,
 Like you may Britons think, that 'twas enough,
 The sentence pass'd, a Socrates should die !
 The sage, obedient to the law's decree,
 Took from the weeping executioner
 The draught, resign'd ; amidst his sorrowing friends,
 Full of immortal hopes, convers'd sublime ;
 And, half in Heaven— compos'd himself, and died !

Oh envy'd fate ! oh happiness supreme !
 So let me die ; so, 'midst my weeping friends,
 Resign my life ! I ask not the delay
 Ev'n of a moment. Law, thou'st have thy due !
 Nor thou, nor justice, can I ave more to claim.

Public Punishment.

But equal laws, on truth and reason built,
Look to humanity with lenient eye,
And temper rigid justice with the claims
Of heaven-descended mercy ! to condemn
Sorrowing and slow ; while studious to correct,
Like man's all-gracious parent, with the view
Benign and laudable, of moral good,
And reformation perfect. Hither then,
Ye sons of sympathy, of wisdom ; friends
To order, to compassion, to the state,
And to your fellow-beings ; hither come,
To this wild realm of uproar ! hither haste,
And see the reformation, see the good
Wrought by confinement in a den like this !

View, with unblushing front, undaunted heart,
The callous harlot in the open day
Administer her poisons 'midst a rout
Scarcely less bold, or poison'd than herself !
View, and with eyes that will not hold the tear
In gentle pity gushing for such griefs,—
View, the young wretch, as yet unfledg'd in vice,
Just shackled here, and by the veteran throng,

Public Punishment.

In every infamy and every crime
Grey and insulting, quickly taught to dare,
Harden'd like them in guilt's opprobrious school ;
Each bashful sentiment, incipient grace,
Each yet remorseful thought of right and wrong
Murder'd and buried in his darken'd heart !—
Hear how these veterans clank,—ev'n jovial clank
—Such is obduracy and vice—their chains * !
Hear, how with curses hoarse and vauntings bold,
Each spirits up, encourages and dares
His desperate fellow to more desperate proofs
Of future hardy enterprise; to plans
Of death and ruin ! Not exulting more
Heroes or chiefs for noble acts renown'd,
Holding high converse, mutually relate

* This circumstance is slightly mentioned before, and alludes to a fact equally singular and disgusting. The rattling of their fetters is frequently, and in a wanton manner, practised amongst some of the worst offenders, as if an amusement, or to show their insensibility to shame. How shocking to see human nature thus in ruins ! Here it is emphatically so, worse than in bedlam, as madness with reason is more dreadful than without it.

Public Punishment.

Gallant achievements worthy, than the sons
Of plunder and of rapine here recount
On peaceful life their devastations wild,
Their dangers, hair-breadth 'scapes, atrocious feats,
Confederate, and confederating still
In schemes of deathful horror! Who, surpris'd,
Can such effects contemplate, upon minds
Estrang'd to good: fermenting on the lees
Of pregnant ill; associate and combin'd
In intercourse infernal, restless, dire;
And goading constant each to other's thoughts
To deeds of desperation, from the tale
Of vaunted infamy oft told: sad fruit
Of the mind's vacancy! And to that mind
Employment none is offer'd: not an hour
To secret recollection is assign'd;
No seasonable sound instruction brought,
Food for their thoughts, self-gnawing. Not the day
To rest and duty dedicate, finds here
Or rest or duty; revel'd off, unmark'd;
Or like the others undistinguish'd, save
By riot's roar, and self-consuming sloth!

Public Punishment.

For useful occupation none is found,
Benevolent to employ their listless hands,
With indolence fatigued ! Thus every day
Anew they gather Guilt's corrosive rust ;
Each wretched day accumulates fresh ills ;
And horribly advanc'd flagitious grown
From faulty, they go forth, tenfold of Hell
More the devoted children : to the state
Tenfold more dangerous envenom'd foes
Than first they enter'd this improving school !
So, cag'd and scanty fed, or taught to rage
By taunting insults, more ferocious burst
On man the tyger or hyæna race,
From fell confinement, and with hunger urg'd,
Gnash their dire fangs, and drench themselves in blood.

But should the felon fierce, th' abandon'd train,
Whose inroads on the human peace forbid,
Almost forbid Compassion's mild regard ;
(Yet ah ! what man with fellow-man can fall
So low as not to claim soft pity's care !)
Should these aught justify the rigid voice,
Which to severe confinement's durance dooms

Public Punishment.

Infallible the body and the soul
To bitterest, surest ruin ; shall we not
With generous indignation execrate
The cruel indiscriminating law,
Which turns misfortune into guilt and curse,
And with the felon harden'd in his crimes
Ranks the poor hapless debtor?—Debt's not guilt:
Alas ! the worthiest may incur the stroke
Of worldly infelicity ! What man,
How high soe'er he builds his earthly nest,
Can claim security from fortune's change,
Or boast him of to-morrow ? Of the East,
Greatest and chief, lo ! humble in the dust,
Sits Job, the sport of misery ! Wealthiest late
Of all blest Araby's most wealthy sons,
He wants a potsherd now to scrape his wounds ;
He wants a bed to shrowd his tortur'd limbs,
And only finds a dunghill ! Creditor,
Would'st thou add sorrows to this sorrowing man
Tear him from ev'n his dunghill, and confine
Midst recreant felons in a British jail?—
Oh British inhumanity ! Ye climes,

Public Punishment.

Ye foreign climes—Be not the truth proclaim'd
Within your streets, nor be it heard or told;
Lest ye retort the cruelty we urge,
And scorn the boasted mildness of our laws!

Blest be the hour,—amidst my depth of woe,
Amidst this perturbation of my soul,
God of my life, I can, I will exult!—
Blest be the hour, that to my humble thought
Thy spirit, sacred source of every good,
Brought the sublime idea, to expand
By charity, the angels grace divine,
The rude, relentless, iron prison gates,
And give the pining debtor to the world,
His weeping family and humble home!
Blest be the hour, when, heedful to my voice,
Bearing the prisoners sad sighs to their ears,
Thousands with soft commiseration touch'd,
Delighted to go forth, and visit glad
Those prisoners in their woe, and set them free!

God of the merciful! thou hast announc'd
On mercy, thy first, dearest attribute,
Chosen beatitude. Oh pour the dew,

Public Punishment.

The fostering dew of mercy on their gifts,
Their rich donations grateful! May the prayers
Of those enfranchis'd by their bounteous zeal
Arise propitious for them! and, when hers'd
In death's cold arms this hapless frame shall lie,
—The generous tear, perchance, not quite withheld;—
When friendly memory to reflection brings
My humble efforts and my mournful fate,
On stable basis founded, may the work
Diffuse its good through ages! nor withhold
Its rescuing influence, till the hour arrives
When wants, and debts, and sickness are no more,
And universal freedom blesseth all!

But, till that hour, on reformation's plan,
Ye generous sons of sympathy, intent,
Boldly stand forth. The cause may well demand,
And justify full well your noblest zeal.
Religion, policy, your country's good,
And Christian pity for the souls of men,
To prisons call you; call to cleanse away
The filth of these foul dens; to purge from guilt,
And turn them to morality's fair school.

Public Punishment.

Nor deem impossible the great attempt,
Augæan though it seem; yet not beyond
The strength of those, that, like Alcides, aim
High to be rank'd amidst the godlike few,
Who shine eternal on fame's amplest roll:
Honour'd with titles, far beyond the first
Which proudest monarchs of the globe can give;
"Saviours and benefactors of mankind!"

Hail, generous Hanway! To thy noble plan,
Sage, sympathetic*, let the muse subscribe,
Rejoicing! In the kind pursuit, good luck
She wisheth thee, and honour. Could her strain
Embellish aught, or aught assist thy toils
Benevolent, 'twould cheer her lonely hours,
And make the dungeon smile. But toils like thine
Need no embellishment; need not the aid
Of muse or feeble verse. Reason-approv'd
And charity-sustain'd, firm will they stand,-

* See Mr. Hanway's pamphlet. intitled. "Solitude in Imprisonment."

Public Punishment.

Under his sanction, who on mercy's works
E'er looks complacent ; and his sons on earth,
His chosen sons, with angel-zeal inspires
To plan and to support. And thine well-plann'd,
Shall be supported. Pity for thy brow,
With policy the sage, shall shortly twine
The garland, worthier far than that of oak,
So fam'd in ancient Rome—the meed of him
Who sav'd a single citizen. More bless'd
Religion mild, with gentle mercy join'd,
Shall hail thee—for the citizens, the souls .
Innumerable restor'd to God, the state,
Themselves, and social life, by solitude,
Devotion's parent, Recollection's nurse,
Source of repentance true ; of the mind's wounds
The deepest prober, but the safest cure*!
Hail, sacred solitude ! These are thy works,
True source of good supreme ! Thy blest effects
Already on my mind's delighted eye

* Vide Taylor's Holy Living and Dying, Part II. p. 42.

Public Punishment.

Open beneficent. Ev'n now I view
The revel-rout dispers'd ; each to his cell
Admitted, silent ! The obstreperous cries
Worse than infernal yells ! the clank of chains—
Opprobrious chains, to man severe disgrace,
Hush'd in calm order, vex the ears no more !
While, in their stead, reflection's deep-drawn sighs,
And prayers of humble penitence are heard,
To heaven well-pleasing, in soft whispers round !
No more, 'midst wanton idleness the hours
Drag wearisome and slow : kind industry
Gives wings and weight to every moment's speed ;
Each minute marking with a golden thread,
Of moral profit. Harden'd vice no more
Communicates its poison to the souls
Of young associates, nor diffuses wide
A pestilential taint. Still thought pervades
The inmost heart ! instruction aids the thought ;
And blest religion, with life-giving ray,
Shines on the mind sequester'd in its gloom ;
Disclosing glad the golden gates, through which
Repentance, led by faith, may tread the courts

Public Punishment.

Of peace and reformation ! Cheer'd and chang'd,
—His happy days of quarantine perform'd—

Lo, from his solitude the captive comes
New-born, and opes once more his grateful eyes
On day, on life, on man, a fellow-man !

Hail sacred solitude ! from thee alone
Flow these high blessings. Nor be't deem'd severe,
Such sequestration ; destin'd to retrieve
The mental lapse ; and to its powers restore
The Heaven-born soul, encrusted with foul guilt ;
'Tis tenderest mercy, 'tis humanity
Yearning with kindest softness ; while her arm
From ruin plucks, effectuates the release,
And gives a ransom'd man to earth—to Heaven !

To the sick patient, struggling in the jaws
Of obstinate disease, e'er knew we yet
Grateful and pleasing from physician's hand
The rough, but salutary draught ?—For that
Do we withhold the draught ? and, falsely kind,
Hang sighing o'er our friend,—allow'd to toss
On the hot fever's bed, rave on and die,
Unmedicin'd, unreliev'd ? But sages, say,

Public Punishment.

Where is the medicine? Who will prescribe a cure,
Or adequate to this corroding ill,
Or in its operation milder found?

See on old Thames's waves indignant ride,
In sullen terror, yonder sable bark,
By state physicians lately launch'd, and hight
Justitia*! Dove-eyed Pity, if thou canst,
That bark ascend with me, and let us learn
How, temper'd with her sister Mercy, there
Reigns justice; and, effective to the ill
Inveterate grown, her lenient aid supplies.

And rolls this bark on Thames's generous flood—
Flood that wafts freedom, wafts the high-born sons
Of gallant liberty to every land?
See the chain'd Britons, fetter'd man by man!
See in the stifled hold—excluded whence

* The Author seems chiefly to have formed his idea of the mode of treating convicts on the Thames, from a late pamphlet, published by Dr. Smith: But we are informed that the evils here complained of have been already, in a great measure, and we trust will soon be wholly removed.

Public Punishment.

Man's common blessing, air, ne'er freely breathes—
They mingle, crowded! To our pamper'd steeds
Inferior how in lodging! Tainted food
And poison'd fumes their life-springs stagnate rank;
They reel aloft for breath: their tottering limbs
Bend weak beneath the burden of a frame
Corrupted, burning; with blue feverous spots
Contagious; and unequal to the toil,
Urg'd by task-masters, vehement, severe,
On the chill sand bank!—by despair and pain
Worn down and wearied, some their being curse,
And die, devoting to destruction's rage
Society's whole race detested! Some,
More mild, gasp out in agonies of soul
Their loath'd existence; which nor physic's aid,
Nor sweet religion's interposing smile,
Sooths with one ray of comfort! Gracious God!
And this is mercy!—Thus, from sentenc'd death,
Britons in pity respite, 'to restore
And moralize mankind! Correction this,
Just Heaven, design'd for reformation's end!
Ye slaves, that bred in tyranny's domains

 Public Punishment.

Toil at the galleys, how supremely blest,
 How exquisite your lot, (so much deplor'd
 By haughty sons of freedom) to the fate
 Experienc'd hourly by her free-born sons,
 In our Britannia's vaunted residence * ;
 Sole, chosen residence of faith refin'd,
 And genuine liberty ! Ye senators,
 Ye venerable sages of the law,
 In just resentment for your country's fame,
 Wipe off this contradictory reproach
 To manners, and to policy like yours !
 Correct, but to amend : 'Tis God's own plan.
 Correct, but to reform ; then give to men
 The means of reformation : Then, restor'd
 To recollection, to himself, to God,

* There is a thought in Lucan to the same purpose, elegantly expressed.

" Felices Arabes, Medique, Eoaque Tellus,

" Quam sub perpetuis tenuerunt fata tyrannis.

" Ex populis, qui regna ferunt, Sors ultima nostra est,

" Quos servire pudet."

Pharsal. Lib. 7.

Public Punishment.

The criminal will bless your saving hand ;
And brought to reason, to religion brought,
Will own that solitude, as solely apt
For work so solemn, has that work achiev'd,
Miraculous, and perfect of his cure.

Ah me !—to sentiments like these estrang'd,
Estrang'd as ignorant, and never pent
Till this sad chance within a prison's wall,
With what deep force, experienc'd, can I urge
The truths momentous ! How their power I feel
In this my solitude, in this lone hour,
This melancholy midnight hour of thought,
Encircled with the unhappy ! firmly clos'd
Each barricadoed door, and left, just God,
Oh blessing—left to pensiveness and Thee !

To me how high a blessing ! nor contains
Seclusion aught of punishment ; to mix
With wretches here were punishment indeed ?
How dread a punishment !—In life's best days,
Of all most chosen, valued and belov'd,
Was soft retirement's season. From youth's dawn
To solitude inur'd, " ne'er less alone

Public Punishment.

“Than when alone,” with him so truly fam’d
In wisdom’s school, my heart could ever beat
Glad unison. To meditation’s charms,
Pleas’d votary, how have pass’d my sweetest hours
In her secrete and calm society !
Still Meditation, Solitude’s fair child,
Man’s dearest friend,—Oh, happy be the time
That introduc’d me to thy hallow’d train ;
That taught me through thy genial lessons sage
My best, my truest dignity to place
In thought, reflection deep, and studious search,
Divinest recreations of the mind !
Oh, happy be the day which gave that mind
Learning’s first tincture—blest thy fostering care,
Thou most belov’d of parents, worthiest sire !
Which, taste-inspiring, made the letter’d page
My favourite companion : most esteem’d
And most improving ! Almost from the day
Of earliest childhood to the present hour,
Of gloomy, black misfortune, books, dear books,
Have been, and are, my comforts : Morn and night,
Adversity, prosperity, at home,

Public Punishment.

Abroad, health, sickness,—good or ill report,
The same firm friends ; the same refreshment rich,
And source of consolation ! Nay, ev'en here
Their magic power they lose not : still the same,
Of matchless influence in this prison-house,
Unutterably horrid ; in an hour
Of woe, beyond all fancy's fictions drear.

Drear hour !—What is it !—Lost in poignant thought,
Lost in the retrospection manifold
Of thee, lov'd study,—and of thee, my sire,
Who, to the fountain fair of Science led
My infant feet,—I lose all count of time,
I lose myself. List !—'tis dread midnight's hour,
When waking fancy with invention wild
(By ages hallow'd) hath to spirits assign'd
—Spirits of dear departed friends—to walk
The silent gloom, and bring us from the dead
Tales harrowing up the soul aghast !—And, hark !
Solemn and slow the iron tongue of night
Resounds alarming ! My o'er-harass'd soul
Confue'd, is lost in sorrows : down mine eyes

Public Punishment.

Stream the full tears, distress is all alive,
And quick imagination's pulse beats high.

“ Dear father, is it thou ? ” Methought his ghost
Glided in silence by me ! Not a word,—
While mournfully he shakes his dear pale face !
O stay, thou much-lov'd parent ! stay, and give
One word of consolation ; if allow'd
To son, like whom no son hath ever lov'd,
None ever suffer'd ! See, it comes again :
August it flits across th' astonish'd room !
I know thee well, thy beauteous image know :
Dear spirit stay, and take me to the world
Where thou art. And where thou art, oh my father,
I must, I must be happy.—Every day
Thou know'st, remembrance hath embalm'd thy love,
And wish'd thy presence. Melancholy thought,
At last to meet thee in a place like this !
Oh stay and waft the instant—But, 'tis gone,
The dear delusion ! He nor hears my words,
My filial anxiety, nor regards
My pleading tears. 'Twas but a coinage vain

Public Punishment.

Of the distemper'd fancy! 'Gone, 'tis gone,
And here I'm left a trembling wretch to weep
Unheard, unpitied left, to weep alone!

Nor thou, Maria, with me! Oh, my wife,
And is this bitter with the bitterest mix'd,
That I must lose thy heavenly company,
And consolation soothing! Yet, 'tis best:
Thy tenderness, thy presence, doth but wound
And stab to the keenest quick my bursting heart!
"I have undone thee!" Can I then sustain
Thy killing aspect, and that tender tear
Which secret steals adown thy lovely face,
Dissembling smiles to cheer me—cheer me, Heavens!
Look on the mighty ruin I have pluck'd,
Pluck'd instant, unsuspected, in the hour
Of peace and dear security on her head!
And where—O where can cheerfulness be found?
Mine must be mourning ever. Oh, my wife,
"I have undone thee!"—What th' infuriate hand
Of foes vindictive could not have achiev'd,
In mercy would not, I have wrought! Thy husband!
Thy husband, lov'd with such unshaken truth.

Public Punishment.

Thy husband, lov'd with such a steady flame,
From youth's first hour!—Even he hath on thee pluck'd,
On thee, his soul's companion, life's best friend,
Such desolation, as to view would draw
From the wild savage pity's deepest groan!

Yes, yes, thou coward mimic, pamper'd vice,
High praise be sure is thine. Thou hast obtain'd
A worthy triumph *! Thou hast pierc'd to the quick
A weak, an amiable female heart,
A conjugal heart most faithful, most attach'd:
Yet can I pardon thee; for poor buffoon,
Thy vices must be fed; and thou must live,
Luxurious live, a foe to God and man;
Commission'd live, thy poison to diffuse,
And taint the public virtue with thy crimes.
Yes, I can pardon thee—low as thou art,
And far too mean an object ev'n of scorn;
For thou her merits knew'st not. Hadst thou known,

* Alluding to the character of Mrs. Simony, introduced by Mr. Foote in his play of *The Cozeners*.

Public Punishment.

Thou,—callous as thou art to every sense
Of human feeling, every nobler touch
Of generous sensibility,—even thou
Could'st not have wanton pierc'd her gentle breast;
But at a distance awful would'st have stood,
And, like thy prototype of oldest time,
View'd her just virtues pass in triumph by,
And own'd, howe'er reluctant——

March 30, 1777.

END OF THE THIRD WEEK.

THOUGHTS IN PRISON;



WEEK THE FOURTH.

THE TRIAL.

DREAD'ST thou an earthly bar? Thou who so oft
In contemplation serious hast employ'd
Thy dearest meditation's on a bar
Tremendously decisive! who so oft
That bar's important terrors hast display'd
To crowds attentive; with the solemn theme
Rapt in thought profound—And beats thy heart
With throbs tumultuous—fail thy trembling knees,
Now that in judgment thou must stand before
Weak mortals, like thyself, and soon like thee,
Shivering with guilt and apprehensions dire,
To answer in dread judgment 'fore their God?

The Trial.

What gives that judgment terror? Guilt, pale guilt;
Conscience accusing stern; the fiery law,
The terrible hand-writing on the wall!
But vanish these,—that mighty Day's-man found,
Who, smiling on confession's genuine tear,
The meek repentant aspect, and the hand
With ready, perfect retribution fraught,
Urges complete his ransom, and sets free
Th' immortal prisoner.—But, ah me! on earth
Such golden mercy reigns not: here is found
No potent Day's-man; here no ransom full,
No clement mediator. Here stern law,
With visage all-unbending, eyes alone
The rigorous act. Confession here is guilt,
And restitution perfect, perfect loss!
Ah me the while, here men the judges are;
And there, th' Omniscient mercy's source and stream!
Triumphant consolation! Firm in faith,
And justify'd by him whose precious blood
For man flow'd liberal, the soul secure
Of future acceptation at that bar

 The Trials

Of trial most momentous, soars above
 The world's severest trials *, and can view

* The verses subjoined were written by the King of Prussia, after a defeat, when one of his general officers had proposed to set him the example of self-destruction :

Dans ces jours, pleins d'alarmes
 La constance et la fermeté
 Sont les boucliers et les armes
 Que j'oppose à l'adversité :

Que le Destin me persecute,
 Qu'il prépare ou hâte ma chute,
 Le danger ne peut m'ébranler :
 Quand le vulgaire est plein de crainte,
 Que l'espérance semble éteinte,
 L'homme fort doit le signaler.

A friend having given Dr. Dodd in prison a copy of these lines, he was much pleased with them, and immediately paraphrased them as follows :

In these sad moments of severe distress,
 When dangers threaten, and when sorrows press,
 For my defence, behold what arms are given—
 Firmness of soul, and confidence in Heaven !
 With these, though fortune hunt me through the land,
 Though instant, utter ruin seem at hand,

 The Trial.

Serene the horrors of an earthly bar,
 Though far than death more horrid. Yes, kind death,
 How preferable far thy sight to me !
 Oh that, without this tedious, dread detail
 Of awful circumstance,—this long, sad pomp
 Of ministering wretchedness, thy friendly shaft
 Had instant reach'd, and pierc'd my tortur'd heart;
 How had I blest the stroke, and been at peace !
 But through a dreary avenue of woe,
 A lengthen'd vault of black distress and shame,
 With mournful, melancholy sable hung,
 Must I be led *,—or ere I can receive
 Thine icy comforts to my chill'd life's blood !

Compos'd and self-collected I remain,
 Nor start at perils, nor of ills complain.
 To mean despair the low, the servile fly,
 When Hope's bright star seems darken'd in their sky :
 Then shines the Christian, and delights to prove
 His faith unshaken, and unchang'd his love !

* *Segnius irritant animos demissa per aurem,
 Quam quæ sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus, et quæ
 Ipse sibi tradit Spectator?*

Hor.

The Trial.

Welcome, thrice welcome were they ; but the call
Of Heaven's dread arbiter we wait : His will
Is rectitude consummate. 'Tis the will
Parental of high wisdom and pure love.
Then to that will submissive bend, my soul :
And, while meek resignation to the rod
Corrective of his justice and his love
Obedient bows,—Oh for impartial search !
Oh for a trial strict, to trace the cause,
The fatal cause whence sprung the ill deplor'd !
And why—sad spectacle of woe—we stand
Thus, sin and sorrow sunk, at this dread bar !

Return, blest hours—ye peaceful days, return !
When through each office of celestial love
Ennobling piety my glad feet led
Continual, and my head each night to rest
Lull'd on the downy pillow of content !
Dear were thy shades, O Ham, and dear the hours
In manly musing 'midst thy forests pass'd,
And antique woods of sober solitude,
Oh Epping, witness to my lonely walks
By Heaven-directed contemplation led !

The Trial.

Ye days of duty, tranquil nights, return !
How ill exchang'd for those, which busier scenes
To the world's follies dedicate, engross'd
In specious trifling! all-important deem'd,
While guilt, O Chesterfield, with seeming gold
Of prime refinement, through thy fostering smile,
And patronage auspicious !

Sought by thee,

And singled out, unpatronis'd, unknown ;
By thee, whose taste consummate was applause,
Whose approbation merit ; forth I came,
And with me to the task, delighted, brought
The upright purpose, the intention firm
To fill the charge, to justify the choice,
Perchance too flattering to my heart ; a heart
Frank, inexpert, unhackney'd in the world,
And yet estranged to guile ! But ye, more skill'd
In that world's artful style, judges severe ;
Say, in the zenith of bright Stanhope's sun,
(Though set that sun, alas, in misty clouds !)
Say, 'midst his lustre, whom would not that choice
Have flatter'd ?—and still more, when urg'd, approv'd,

The Trial.

And bless'd by thee, St. David's ¹ honour'd friend ;
Alike in wisdom's and in learning's school
Advanc'd and sage !—Short pause, my muse, and sad,
Allow, while leaning on Affection's arm
Deep-sighing Gratitude, with tears of truth,
Bedews the urn, the happy urn, where rest
Mingled thy ashes, oh my friend, and her's,
Whose life bound up with thine in amity
Indissolubly firm, felt thy last pang
Disrupting as her own ! gently sigh'd forth
The precious boon ! while sprung her faithful soul,
Indignant without thee to rest below,
On wings of love, to meet thee in the skies !
Blest pair, and envied ! Envied and embalm'd
In our recording memory, my wife,
My friend, my lov'd Maria, be our lot
Like theirs !—But soft,—ah my foreboding thoughts !
Repress the gushing tear ;—return my song.
Plac'd thus, and shelter'd underneath a tree,
Which seem'd like that in visions of the night
To Babylonia's haughty prince pourtray'd,
Whose height reach'd Heav'n, and whose verdant boughs

 The Trial.

Extended wide their succour and their shade,
 How did I trust, too confident ! how dream
 That fortune's smiles were mine ! and how deceiv'd,
 By gradual declension yield my trust,
 My humble happy trust on Thee, my God !
 How ill-exchang'd for confidence in man,
 In Chesterfields, in princes !—Wider scenes,
 Alps still on Alps were open'd to my view ;
 And, as the circle in the flood enlarg'd,
 Enlarg'd expences call. Fed to the full
 With flattery's light food *, and the puff'd wind
 Of promises delusive——“ Onward still !
 “ Press onward,” cried the world's alluring voice ;
 “ The time of retribution is at hand :
 “ See the ripe vintage waits thee.” Fool and blind,

* So praysen babes, the peacock's starry traine,
 And wondren at bright Argus' blazing eye ;
 But who rewards him e'er the more for thy ?
 Or feeds him once the fuller by a graine ?
 Sike praise is smoke that sheddeth in the skie,
 Sike words been winde, and wasten soon in vaine.

SPENSER.

The Trial.

Still credulous I heard, and still pursued
The airy meteor glittering through the mire,
Through brake and bog, till more and more engulf'd
In the deceitful quag, floundering I lay.
Nor heard was then the world's alluring voice,
Or promises delusive; then not seen
The tree umbrageous, with its ample shade:
For me, alas, that tree had shade no more!
But struggling in the gulf, my languid eye
Saw only round the barren rushy moor,
The flat, wide dreary desert, till a hope,
Dress'd by the tempter in an angel's form,
Presenting its fair hand—imagin'd fair,
Though foul as murkiest hell, to drag me forth,
Down to the centre plung'd me, dark and dire
Of howling ruin; bottomless abyss
Of desolating shame, and nameless woe!

But, witness Heaven and earth, 'midst this brief stage,
This blasting period of my chequer'd life,
Though by the world's gay vanities allur'd,
I danc'd, too oft, alas, with the wild route
Of thoughtless fellow-mortals, to the sound

The Trial.

Of folly's tinkling bells ; though oft, too oft,
Those pastimes shar'd enervating, which ill
—Howe'er by some judg'd innocent—become
Religion's sober character and garb ;
Though oft, too oft, by weak compliance led,
External seemings, and the ruinous bait
Of smooth politeness ; what my heart condemn'd
Unwise it practis'd ; never without pang ;
Though too much influence'd by the pleasing force
Of native generosity, uncurb'd
And unchastis'd (as reason, duty taught)
Prudent economy, in thy sober school
Of parsimonious lecture ; useful lore,
And of prime moment to our worldly weal ;
—Yet witness heaven and earth, amidst this dream,
This transient vision, ne'er so slept my soul,
Or sacrific'd my hands at folly's shrine,
As to forget Religion's public toil,
Study's improvement, or the pleading cause
Of suffering humanity.—Gracious God,
How wonderful à compound, mixture strange,
Incongruous, inconsistent, is frail man !

The Trial.

Yes, my lov'd Charlotte, whose top-stone with joy
My careful hands brought forth, what time expell'd
From Ham's lost paradise, and driv'n to seek
Another place of rest? Yes, beauteous fane,
To bright Religion dedicate, thou well
My happy public labours canst attest,
Unwearied and successful in the cause,
The glorious, honour'd cause of Him, whose love
Bled for the human race: Thou canst attest
The Sabbath-days delightful, when the throng
Crowded thy hallow'd walls with eager joy,
To hear truth evangelical, the sound
Of gospel comfort! When attentive sat,
Or at the holy altar humbly knelt,
Persuasive, pleasing patterns—Athol's Duke,
The polish'd Hervey, Kingston the humane,
Aylesbury and Marchmont, Romney all-rever'd;
With numbers more—by splendid titles less
Than piety distinguish'd and pure zeal.

Nor 'midst this public duty's blest discharge,
Pass'd idle, unimproving, unemploy'd,

The Trial.

My other days ; as if the Sabbath's task
Fulfill'd, the business of the week was done,
Or self-allow'd. Witness, thrice holy book,
Pure transcript of th' Eternal Will to Man ;
Witness with what assiduous care I turn'd
Daily thy hallow'd page ; with what deep search
Explor'd thy sacred meaning ; through the round
Of learn'd expositors and grave, trod slow,
And painfully deliberating ; the while
My labours unremitting to the world
Convey'd instruction large ;—and shall convey,
When moulders in the grave the feeble hand,
The head, the heart, that gave those labours * birth.

Oh happy toil, oh labours well employ'd,
Oh sweet remembrance to my sickening soul,
Blest volumes ! Nor though levell'd in the dust
Of self-annihilation, shall my soul
Cease to rejoice, or thy preventive grace

* Alluding to " Commentary on the Bible," in three volumes folio.

The Trial.

Adoring laud, Fountain of every good !
For that no letter'd poison ever stain'd
My page, how weak soe'er ; for that my pen,
However humble, ne'er has trac'd a line
Of tendency immoral, whose black guilt
It well might wish to blot with tears of blood :
Dear to the Christian shall my little works,
—Effusions of a heart sincere, devote
To God and duty, happily survive
Their wretched master ; and thro' lengthen'd years
To souls oppress, comfort's sweet balm impart,
And teach the pensive mourner how to die *.

Thou too, blest Charity, whose golden key
So liberal unlocks the prison's gate
At the poor debtor's call ; oh, witness thou,
To cruel taxers of my time and thought,
All was not lost, all were not misemploy'd,
Nor all humanity's fair rights forgot ;

* Referring to "Comfort for the Afflicted," and "Reflections on Death."

The Trial.

Since thou, spontaneous effort of the last,
My pity's child, and by the first matur'd,
Amidst this flattering, fatal era, rose ;
Rose into being, to perfection rose,
Beneath my humble fostering ; and at length
Grown into public favour, thou shalt live,
And endless good diffuse, when sleeps in dust
Thy hapless founder, now, by direst fate,
Lock'd in a prison, whence thy bounty sets,
And shall—oh comfort—long set thousands free.

Happy, thrice happy, had my active zeal,—
Already deem'd too active, chance, by some,
Whose frozen hearts, in icy fetters bound
Of sordid selfishness, ne'er felt the warmth,
The genial warmth of pure benevolence,
Love's ardent flame aspiring ; had that flame
Kindled my glowing zeal into effect,
And to thy counterpart* existence giv'n,

* He intended to have established a "Charity for the Loan of Money, without interest, to industrious tradesmen." Necessary papers for that end were collected from Dublin, &c.; and the fol-

 The Trial.

Lov'd institution ; with its guardian aid
Protecting from the prison's ruinous doors,

lowing address, which he wrote, and inserted in the Public Ledger of the 1st January 1776, will in some measure explain his purpose :

To the Wealthy in the Commercial World.

I HAVE often wished most sincerely to see a charitable fund established in this great and trading city, for the beneficent purpose of "lending to honest and industrious tradesmen small sums without interest, and on a reasonable security."

The benefits which would arise from such an establishment are too obvious to need enumeration. Almost every newspaper tends more and more to convince me of the necessity of such a plan ; for in almost every newspaper we read advertisements from tradesmen, soliciting little sums in their distress, and offering—poor unhappy men! even premiums for those little sums.

It is not possible but that persons occupied in trade and commerce must feel for the difficulties of their brethren, and be ready to promote the undertaking I would wish to recommend, although on no interested motives ; for I am no tradesman, nor can any way be benefited by the plan. Pure good will, and a compassionate respect to the hardships and distresses of my fellow-creatures, actuate my heart : and from these motives I shall be happy to proceed upon, and prosecute this plan, with all the efforts and assiduity I am able, if it shall be approved by the benevolent ; and they will testify that approbation, and desire of concurrence, by a

The Trial.

Those whom thy kindly mercy rescues thence!
 Or, had that zeal on firm foundation fix'd
 Like thine my favourite Magdalen,—the plan,
 Preservative of tender female fame*,

line directed to D. at Anderson's Coffee-house, Fleet-street. In consequence of which, should a probability of success appear, a meeting shall speedily be advertised in the papers, and all measures pursued to put the good design into immediate execution, which on such a meeting may be judged advisable. It may be proper just to observe, that in many cities abroad,—at Rome in particular,—there are institutions of this sort; and there has been one established for many years at Dublin, which is found productive of the happiest consequences.

It is made in Scripture one-characteristic of the good man, "that he is merciful, and lendeth;" and a very small sum, thus given to a permanent establishment, may enable a man to lend for perpetuity!

How can we better begin the new year, my worthy and humane countrymen, than by entering on a work which may draw down upon us God's blessing, by our charitable relief to many sons and daughters of honest and laborious industry?

" 4

HUMANITY.

* "A plan for a National Female Seminary"—since found amongst the Author's papers; and which appears to have undergone the inspection, and received the approbation, of some very distinguished names.

The Trial.

Fair innocence and virtue, from those ills
Destructive, complicate, which only find
Relief beneath thy hospitable roof;
How had I died exulting!—But, oh raise,
Inspire some godlike spirit, some great soul,
Father of mercies, of all love, all good,
Author and finisher;—these and every work
Beneficent, with courage to pursue,
With wisdom to complete! Oh crown his zeal;
While sorrowing human nature, by his hand
Cherish'd and sooth'd, to latest times shall tell,
And bless with tears of gratitude his name.

Mine is a different fate,—confess'd, just Judge,
The meed of human mixture in my works
Imperfect, frail; and needing, even the best,
Thy pardon and the cleansing of thy blood;
Else whence the frequent retributions base,
Calumnious and ungrateful, for the deeds
Of private pity! Whence, for public acts,
The stab opprobrious, and the slanders vile!
Or whence, at this dread moment,—from the sight
Shrowd me in tenfold darkness!—Mercy, Heaven!

The Trial.

And is it He—th' ingenuous youth, so loft
Of all my being, fortune, comfort deem'd
The generous, ample source?—And is it He,
In whom, through dread misfortune's darkest night,
I saw Hope's day-star rising?—Angel of peace,
Amidst his future hours, my life's sad loss,
Let not accusing conscience to his charge
Impute, distracting—to my crimson guilt,
Oh let him lay it, as the forfeit due,
And justly paid!—Would Heaven that it were paid!
Oh, that with Rome's first Cæsar, in my robe
From sight so killing, mantled up mine eyes,
I might receive the welcome stab; sigh forth,
“My Philip, my lov'd Stanhope,—Is it thou?
“Then let me die.”—

Yet, though thus wounded at this bar I stand
In pains unutterable, witness Heaven,
With deep commiseration do I view
Their sedulous anxiety to prove
A guilt my heart—too wounded to deny,
Wounded by that guilt's sense, its bitterest part,
Instant avow'd. What need then all this toil?

The Trial.

The deed is done. Wound not the fall'n hart,—
'Tis cruel—that lies bleeding at your feet :
' I own the whole ; I urge no legal plea.
' On dire necessity's imperious call,
' (Sons of the robe, of commerce, sons of men,
' That call imperious have you never heard ;)
' On full intention to repay the whole ;
' And on that full intention's perfect work,
' Free restoration and complete ; on wrong
' Or injury to none design'd or wrought, .
' I rest my claim ;—I found my sole defence.'
" Groundless,—'tis thunder in my ears—and weak :
" For in the rigid courts of human law, .
" Nor restitution wipes away th' offence,
" Nor does intention justify." So spoke
(And who shall argue?) Judgment's awful voice !
Haste then, ye weeping jurymen, and pass
Th' awarded sentence. To the world, to fame,
To honour, fortune, peace, and Stanhope lost,
What have I more to lose ? or can I think
Death were an evil to a wretch like me ?

 The Trial.

Yet, oh ye sons of justice!—ere we quit
 This awful court, expostulation's voice
 One moment hear impartial. Give a while
 Your honest hearts to nature's touches true,
 Her fine resentments faithful; draw aside
 That veil from reason's clear reflecting view,
 Which practice long, and rectitude suppos'd
 Of laws establish'd, hath obstructive hung.
 But pleads, or time, or long prescription aught
 In favour or abatement of the wrong
 By folly wrought, or error? Hoary grown,
 And sanctify'd by custom's habit gray,
 Absurdity stalks forth, still more absurd,
 And double shame reflects upon an age
 Wise and enlighten'd. Should not equal laws
 Their punishments proportionate to crimes * ;

* Horace's precept must for ever stand forth as irrefragably just:

—————“ Adsit
 Regular! peccatis quæ poenas irroget æquas
 Ne Scutica dignum horribili sectere flagello.”
 Sat. 3. Lib. 1.

 The Trial.

Nor, all Draconic, ev'n to blood pursue
 Vindicate, where the venial poor offence
 Cries loud for mercy? Death's the last demand
 Law can exact: the penalty extreme
 Of human crime! and shall the petty thief
 Succumb beneath its terrors, when no more
 Pays the bold murderer, crimson'd o'er with guilt?
 Few are the crimes against or God or man,
 —Consult th' eternal code of right or wrong—
 Which e'er can justify this last extreme*,
 This wanton sporting with the human life,
 This trade in blood. Ye sages, then, review,
 Speedy and diligent, the penal code,

* "He had sometimes expressed his thoughts about our penal laws, that they were too sanguinary; that they were against not only the laws of God, but of nature; that his own case was hard, that he should die for an act which he always declared to be wrong, but by which he never intended to injure any one individual; and that, as the public had forgiven him, he thought he might have been pardoned. But now (the day before his execution) he laid all these thoughts touching himself aside, though he continued to think in the same manner of the penal laws to his end." See the Ordinary's account.

The Trial.

Humanity's disgrace ; our nation's first
And just reproach, amidst its vaunted boasts
Of equity and mercy :—Shiver not
Full oft your inmost souls, when from the bench
Ye deal out death tremendous ; and proclaim
Th' irrevocable sentence on a wretch
Pluck'd early from the paths of social life,
And immature, to the low grave consign'd
For misdemeanors trivial ? Runs not back,
Affrighted, to its fountain, your chill'd blood,
When deck'd in all the horrid pomp of death,
And gothic rage surpassing, to the flames
The weaker sex,—incredible—you doom ;
Denouncing punishments the more severe,
As less of strength is found to bear their force :
Shame on the savage practice ! Oh stand forth
In the great cause,—Compassion's, Equity's,
Your Nation's, Truth's, Religion's, Honour's cause,
—Stand forth, reflecting Eden * ! Well thou'st toil'd

* See Mr. Eden's admirable book on *Pitaval Laws*.

The Trial.

Already in the honourable field :

Might thy young labours animate, the hour

Auspicious is arriv'd. Sages esteem'd,

And venerably learn'd, as in the school

Of legal science, so in that of worth

And sentiment exalted, fill the bench :

And lo ! the imperial Muscovite, intent

On public weal, a bright example shines

Of civilizing justice. Sages, rise :

The cause the animating pattern calls.

Oh, I adjure you with my parting breath,

By all your hopes of mercy and of peace,

By all the blood henceforth unjustly spilt,

Or wantonly by all the sorrows deep,

And scalding tears shed for that blood so spilt ;

In God's tremendous name, lo, I adjure,

Without procrastination to the task

Important that you haste ! With equal hand

In scales of temperate justice, balance well

The claims of pleading mercy ! Unto crimes

Inflictions just and adequate assign ;

On reformation or example sole,

The Trial.

And all impartial, constantly intent,
Banish the rage for blood ! for tortures fell
Savage, reproachful. Study to restore
Its young, its useful members to the state,
Well disciplin'd, corrected, moralized ;
Preserv'd at once from shame, from death, from hell,
Men, rationals, immortals.—Sons of God,
Oh prosperous be your labours, crown'd your zeal !

So shall the annals of our Sovereign's reign,
Distinguish'd by your virtue,—noble fruit
Of that high independence he bestow'd *
So freely from the treasury of his love
To genuine justice—down to future times,
Transmitting the rich blessing, shine renown'd,
With truest glory ; not by her's surpass'd,
Th' immortal Legislator of the North !

Ah me unhappy ! to that Sovereign's ear
Resolv'd to bring those truths which, labouring long,

* Referring to the independence of the judges settled by the King, as almost one of the first acts of his reign.

The Trial.

Have lain and toss'd upon my anxious thoughts * :
Thence too am I excluded ! . Fatal stroke,
And wounding to my peace ! Rigour extreme
Of angry vengeance ! “ Nay, it recks not now,”
(Oft 'midst the tempest of my grief I cried)
“ It recks not now what falls me ! From the house
“ Of him I honour'd, shut ! Him whose lov'd sire
“ My muse in strains elegiac weeping sung †,
“ Mixing her tribute with a nation's tears !
“ Him to whose high-born race,—of liberty
“ Firm friends and fautors,—from my earliest youth;
“ My heart, devoted, willing homage paid,
“ And sacred reverence : so paternal love
“ And so my college taught, delightful Clare !”
Dear ever to my memory, for hours
In innocence and peaceful study past ;
Nor less for thee, my friend, my Lancaster !

* See my Sermon on the Injustice, &c. of capital Punishments.

† See my “Elegy on the Death of Frederick Prince of Wales.”
Poems, p. 63.

The Trial.

Blest youth, in early hour from this life's woes
In richest mercy borne ! Had I but died,
Oh had I died for thee, how had I shunn'd
This harsh severity,—exclusion sad
From my lov'd royal master ! how escap'd
Its ills attendant !—Reputation dies,
The darling of my soul, beneath the stroke !
Wild, wanton curses tear my mangled frame !
My sphere of usefulness contracted shrinks ;
And infamy herself with “ ghastly smiles”
My ruin ridicules ! Turn, turn my brain,
Distracted, madden'd, turn ! Of reason more,
Religion, duty, eminence, dream not :
The door of mercy's clos'd. Thee—oft from thee,
Mercy, sweet Heaven, have I sought and found ;
From fellow-mortals seldom could I find,
How humbled e'er, or penitent for faults !
—And who of erring mortals faultless breathes ?
Mercy, that gift of thine, which most adorns
The judge's vestment, and the monarch's crown.

Adieu then to its hope, its earthly hope ;
Elsewhere we'll seek it. Forth—oh forth, my friends,

The Trial.

My generous, supporting, weeping friends,
Forth from the bar conduct me. It is past.
Justice has done her office. Mercy's fled ;
And smiling, lo ! she sits upon a cloud
Of fleecy whiteness, ting'd with azur'd gold,
And beams ineffable composure on me !
Light sits my bosom'd master on his throne ;
Airy and disencumber'd feels my soul,
And, panting, wishes to spring instant up
To that white cloud,—the golden vehicle
To realms of rest immortal ! In my eyes,
So languid, late, and all suffus'd with tears,
Methinks I see Hope's lamp rekindled bright ;
A living lustre ; shedding like the sun
After thick mists, Illumination's smile,
O'er all my countenance, marr'd, dimm'd, and wan.
Cheerly, my friends, oh cheerly ! Look not thus
With pity's melting softness ! Thine alone
Can shake my fortitude. All is not lost.
Lo ! I have gain'd, on this important day
A victory consummate o'er myself,
And o'er this life a victory. On this day,

The Trial.

My birth-day to eternity—I've gain'd
Dismission from a world, where for a while,
Like you, like all, a pilgrim passing poor,
A traveller, a stranger, I have met
But stranger treatment, rude and harsh ! So much
The dearer, more desir'd, the home I seek
Eternal, of my Father and my God !

Ah, little thought ye, prosecutors prompt,
To do me good like this ! little intend
For earthly poverty to give th' exchange
Of wealth eternal. Cheronea's sage,
Thy dogmas here, so paradoxal deem'd
By weak half-thinkers *—see how amply prov'd,
How verify'd by men I judg'd my foes ;—
Friends in disguise, Heaven's instruments of good !
Freely, triumphantly, my soul forgives
Each injury, each evil they have wrought,
Each tear they've drawn, each groan they've cost my
heart,

* See Plutarch " On the Benefits deducible from Enemies,"
Morals, Vol. I.

The Trial.

Guiltless tow'rds them, uninjur'd. Hapless men !
Down do I look with pity ; fervent beg,
And unremitting from all-gracious Heaven
Eternal blessings on you ! Be your lives,
Like mine, true convertites to grace, to God !
And be our deaths,—ah there all difference ends—
Then be our deaths like his, th' atoning just ;
Like his, the only righteous, our last end !

But oh, oblivious memory ! baneful woe,
Which thus in dull forgetfulness can steep
My faculties ;—forgetfulness of her
My better self, for whom alone I wish,
Thus fallen to remember that I am !
My wife, my soul's dear partner in distress,
Where sits she ? lives she ? Ah not lives, but drags
The tedious, torturing, horrid anxious hours
Of this dire day !—In solemn silence wrapt,
—Expressive silence motionless, compos'd
The melancholy mourner meekly waits
The awful issue ! From her lovely eyes
Drops not a tear ! not ev'n a sigh is heard
From her deep-wounded heart : Nor through her lips,

The Trial.

Unsever'd from the luckless morn till night,
Mute sufferer, steals a murmur*! Gentle dove,
So, in the mournful absence of thy mate,
Perhaps or levell'd by the fowler's art,
Or lur'd in net assiduous, sittest thou alone
Upon the bare bough; thy little head
Nestling beneath thy silvery wings; while hang
Thy pennons, late so glossy, shivering down
Unplum'd, neglected, drooping! Through the day
So tried, my tender friends,—another task,
And heavier yet, remains to be perform'd.
Oh, with the balm of comfort, with the voice
Of soothing softness, the sad truth unfold!
Approach the beauteous mourner, all-rever'd;
And tell her, “ that her husband triumphs, lives;—
“ Lives, though condemn'd; lives to a nobler life!
“ Nor in the gladsome view of that high life,

* “ I speechless sat;—nor plaintive word,
“ Nor murmur, from my lips was heard.”

Merrick's Psalms, p. 39.

The Trial.

“ Feels he to death reluctance: Blest with her,

“ Indifferent in his choice to live or die ! ”

Be the decision thine, Father of life !

Thou gavest, thou hast right to take away ;

In each alike beneficent ! If thou

Hast pleasure in me, once more shall I share

Thy hallow'd services, my heart's chief joy ;

If not with happy David—oh like his

Could my song flow repentant—every thought

Uniting cries with resignation's voice,

“ Do with me, Lord, as it shall seem thee good * ? ”

Thus supplicating, down my weary head,

To slumber on its wretched pillow, sunk,

O'erpower'd, oppress'd ; nor on the main-mast high,

Rock'd by the bellowing tempest, and the dash

Of furious surges, the poor ship-boy sleeps ..

More soundly, than my powers o'erwrought, amidst

The din of desperate felons, and the roar

Of harden'd guilt's mad midnight orgies loud !

* 2 Sam. xv. 25, 26.

The Trial.

But fancy free, the busy soul was wake ;
Anticipation pleasing of its state,
When sleeps its clayey prison in the grave,
And forth it bursts to liberty ! Methought
—Such was the vision—in a lowly vale
Myself I found, whose living green was deck'd
With all the beauteous family of Spring :
Pale primrose, modest violet, hare-bell blue,
Sweet-scented eglantine of fragrance rich,
And permanent the rose ; golden jonquil,
And polyanthus variegate of hue,
With lilies dale delighting. Through the midst
Meandering, of pure crystal, flow'd a stream
The flowery banks reflecting : On each side,
With homely cots adorn'd, whose 'habitants,
When sorrow-sunk, my voice of comfort sooth'd ;
When sickness-worn, my hand of care reliev'd,
Tended, and min'istering to all their wants,
Instructed in the language of the skies.
Dear was the office, cheering was the toil,
And something like angelic felt my soul !
When lur'd, methought, by one of gliding hue

The Trial.

(Bright gleam'd the coronet upon his brow,
Rich glow'd his robe of crimson, ermine-deck'd)
I toil'd to gain a neighbouring mountain's top,
Where blaz'd preferment's temple. So my guide,
With smile complacent, taught and led me on,
Softening with artful speech the tedious way,
And arduous ever. As I rose, the view
Still gloomier seem'd, and dreary: the strait path
Still straiter, and more sharp the pointed briars
Entangling! With insulting sneers the crowd,
Pressing the same bad road, jostled me by,
Or threw me prostrate; till fatigu'd and faint,
With feeble voice, exhausted quite, I cried,
"Oh to my vale restore me! to my cots,
"Illustrious guide! my ministrations blest,
"Angelical and blessing!"—With a look
Of killing scorn he ey'd me: Instant down,
Precipitate dash'd o'er me craggy rocks;
Tumbling tumultuous; and in dungeon dark,
Illumin'd only by the furious glare
Of lynx and tygers eyes, through hunger fierce,
And eager to devour, trembling I lay!

The Trial.

When in a moment, through the dungeon's gloom,
Burst light resplendent as the mid-day sun,
From adamant shield of heavenly proof,
Held high by one*, of more than human port,
Advancing slow; while on his tow'ring crest
Sat fortitude unshaken: † At his feet
Crouch'd the half-famish'd savages! From earth
He rais'd me, weeping, and with look of peace
Benignant, pointed to a crimson cross
On his bright shield pourtray'd. A milder form,
Yet of celestial sweetness,—such as oft
My raptur'd eyes have in the tablet trac'd
Of unaffected penitence; of her
Pleasing similitude—the weeping fair
Early from royal but unhallow'd love,
To God's sole service flying†—Fam'd Le Brun,
Thy glowing pencil's master-piece!—Such seem'd

* Faith.

† Madame de la Valiere. This fine picture is in the Chapel of the Carmelite Nuns at Paris.

The Trial.

Repentance, meek approaching. From the den,
Illumin'd and defended by faith's shield,
My trembling feet she led ; and having borne
Through perils infinite, and terrors wild
And various,—fainting almost my sick soul—
She left me at a gate of glittering gold,
Which open'd instantaneous at the touch
Of homely porter *, clad in wolsley gray,
And ever bending lowly to the ground
His modest countenance ! But what a scene
—Admitted through the portal—on my sight
Transported, rush'd ! High on a sapphire throne,
Amidst a flame like carbuncle, sat Love,
Beaming forth living rays of light and joy
On choral crowds of spirits infinite,
In immortality and glory cloth'd ;
And hymning lofty strains to minstrelsy
Of golden harps accorded, in his praise,
Love, uncreate, essential : Love, which bled,

* Humility.

The Trial.

Which bleeding blanch'd to purest white their robes,
And with eternal gold adorn'd their brows !

Dissolv'd, methought, and all my senses rapt
In vision beatific, to a bank

Of purple amaranthus was I borne
By a superior genius. His white wings
Distilling panacea, dove-like spread
Refreshing fragrance o'er me : Firm, of brow
And masculine he seem'd—th' ennobling power
Angelic, destin'd in the human heart
To nourish friendship's flame ! Uprais'd my eyes
As from a trance returning—" Spirit belov'd,
" And honour'd ever !" anxious straight I cried,
" Thrice welcome to my wishes ! Oh impart—
" For you can tell—in these delightful realms
" Of happiness supernal, shall we know,—
" Say, shall we meet and know those dearest friends,
" Those tender relatives, to whose concerns
" You minister appointed ? Shall we meet
" In mutual amity ? mutual converse hold.
" And live in love immortal ? Oh relieve
" My aching heart's solicitude ; and say,

The Trial.

“ Here shall I meet, here know, in boundless bliss,
“ Here view transported, her, my life's best friend,
“ My sorrows faithful soother !”—Gushing tears
Impetuous stopp'd my voice ; and I awoke
To earth, to night, to darkness, and a jail !

April 14, 1777.

END OF THE FOURTH WEEK.

THOUGHTS IN PRISON;



WEEK THE FIFTH.

FUTURITY.

“To death devote!” That in the vernal bloom
Of redolent youth and beauty, on the cross
Hung high her motto*!—she; in name and choice
Of that for better part, like her so fam’d
In story evangelical,—sweet saint,

* Miss Mary Bosanquet, whose motto, encircling a cross, is, “Devoted to Death.” From fourteen years of age she dedicated herself to sincere religion, and to the present hour has persevered in the most exemplary line of duty. Her letters to the author, in his last distress, afforded him peculiar comfort.

Futurity.

Friend of my soul, and soother of my grief
Shall I then dread age, and worn with woe,
To meet the king of terrors?—Coward fear,
Of what we all must meet: The primal curse
Of our first father rests on all his race,
And “Dust to dust,” the charter of mankind!

But, were it possible, oh, who would wish
To stretch the narrow span, grown tedious, stale,
With dull recurrence of the same dull acts,
Ev’n in its happiest state? A toilsome care,
A wearying round of clothing, food, and sleep;
While chequer’d over with a thousand ills
Inevitably painful!—In our frame
Dwell (death’s artillery) diseases dire,
And potent to dislodge the brittle life
With agonies heart-rending! In the soul
Lurks sin, the serpent, with her fiery sting
Of sorrow, rankling on the conscience deep,
Source of all mental misery!—From without,
In close battalion, a black troop of ills
Level their deep-drawn arrows at our peace;
And fail not, as we pass through life’s bad road,

Futurity.

To wound th' unguarded traveller! witness you
Who groan distress'd beneath oppression's scourge ;
Ingratitude's sharp tooth ; the canker'd tongue
Of slander ; fortune's loss ; or bitterer far,
The loss of fame, and soul-connected friends!
Thus tax'd, thus wretched, can the man be wise
Who wishes to retain so poor a boon ?
Who fears to render the deposit up
To his blest hands who gave ? and who thus
Beneficent hath rang'd his moral plan,
Thus good with evil mix'd ; from earth's poor love
(School of probation) suffering man to wean,
And raise his hopes to heaven ? Silence then
The whisper of complaint ; low in the dust
Dissatisfaction's demons growl unheard !
All, all is good, all excellent below :
Pain is a blessing ; sorrow leads to joy,
Joy permanent and solid ! Every ill
Bears with it love paternal : nay, ev'n death,
Grim death itself, in all its horrors clad,
Is man's supremest privilege ! It frees

Futurity.

The soul from prison, from foul sin, from woe,
And gives it back to glory, rest and God!

When will its welcome message lay at peace
My burden'd, beating heart?—Oh strange! to point
Thy darts, inexorable tyrant, there,
Where life laughs crown'd with roses; when these
arms,

Familiar to thy sister Sorrow's fold,
Would so delighted hug thee! But thou lov'st
Full oft the noblest quarry, highest aim;
Lov'st unsuspected, and with silent step,
To steal on the secure; lov'st to deal round
Tremendous and impartial thy stern strokes,
Asserting terrible o'er human-kind
Thy empire irresistible; and now
At monarchs, now at mimics, grinning scorn,
Thy hand indifferent hurls the twanging shaft.

Ah what a group of primest deer lie pierc'd,
Thou hunter all victorious, at thy feet!
Since to thy empire dedicate I fell
From life's bright hope, and languish'd in this grave,

Futurity.

This living, doleful sepulchre immur'd !

Not all thy gold or orient pearl could save
Thee, Lusitania's monarch, from the stroke
Impending long and dread ! Nor, Terrick *, thee,
Thy mitre, and thy rochet ! Ensigns blest,
When worn with sanctity ; then surely chang'd
For crown of gold, and robe of spotless white !

See, neither can the coronet, nor garb
Of ermin'd pomp, from Temple † turn aside
The levell'd blow ; nor, higher fair in price,
Th' uplifted shield of Janssen's honest heart !
Lo ! too, as if in scorn of purple pride,
And all life's glories, in this high parade,
Funeral marches, tragic-actor now,
He who so late light on the comic sock
Trod the gay stage, and bade with laughter's burst
Involuntary the throng'd theatres resound !
And, food for worms, poor Woodward, thou no less

* Bishop of London.

† Countess of Temple.

Futurity.

Than patriots, princes, countesses and priests !
Death scorns distinction : But, despotic power,
Cloth'd in his direst terrors, here he reigns,
Here revels ! Here with bitterest vengeance, shakes
O'er trembling convicts his determin'd shaft,
And gluts himself with horror ! See him lead
From yonder darksome cell, all pale with woe,
That stranger* sinking, who, in luckless hour,
With rash hand pierc'd the bosom he ador'd,
Nor drank of comfort more ! half in his heart
The black lance festering strikes ; and death himself,
Howe'er relentless, ere he drives it home,
Of strange commiseration feels a pang,
Reluctant to his office !—

But, that shriek—

* Alluding to Tolosa, a poor unhappy Spaniard, lately executed for the murder of his female friend. He took scarce any sustenance from the time of the fact, and was more than half dead when convey'd to the place of execution.

Futurity.

Thrilling with dread—whence is it? 'Tis the voice
Of female misery, bursting through the crowd
To the loan dungeon; view that lovely form *,
Deck'd in the neatest white,—yet not so white
And wan as her wild visage: “Keep me not,”
Raving, she cries, “Keep me not, cruel, from him.
“He dies this morn; I know it: he's condemn'd;
“The dreadful judge has done it! He must die,
“My husband! and I'm come, clad in my best,
“To go and suffer with him! I have brought
“Sweet flowers to cheer him, and to strew his corse.
“Pale, pale, and speechless lies it!—Husband come!
“The little infant, fruit of our glad loves,
“Smil'd on me, as with parting breath I blest,
“And kiss'd the dear babe for thee! 'Tis but young;

* This also alludes to a miserable catastrophe, which happened here on the morning of a late execution. The poor young woman who came to visit her husband, had laid in but seven days. As soon as the husband's fetters were knocked off, he stepped aside, and cut his throat in a dismal manner, but not quite sufficiently to finish his existence;—and in that shocking state—paid his debt at the destined place.

 Futurity.

" 'Tis tender yet ;—seven days is young in life :
 " Angels will guard my little innocent :
 " They'll feed it, tho' thou could'st not find it food,
 " And its poor mother too!—And so thou dy'st!
 " For me and it thou dy'st! But not alone ;
 " Thou shalt not go alone : I will die with thee ;
 " Sweet mercy be upon us! Hence, hence, hence!"
 Impetuous then her white arms round his neck
 She threw ; and, with deep groans would pierce a
 rock,
 Sunk fainting. Oh the husband's, father's pangs,
 Stopping all utterance! Up to Heaven he roll'd
 His frantic eyes ; and, staring wildly round
 In desperation's madness, to his heart
 Drove the destructive steel!—Fell death,
 Would'st thou a fuller triumph?—Oh my wife,
 How dismal to our ears the shrieks, the groans!—
 And what a crowd of wild ideas press
 Distracting on the soul! " Merciful Heaven,
 " In pity spare us! Say, it is enough,
 " And bid the avenging angel stay his hand!"
 Death bars the plea ; and with his thundering stalk,

Futurity.

Brushing beside us, calls, in solemn sound,
Heed to his dart grief pointed. Its keen stroke,
Ah, gentle Eleonora* ! gives at once
Relief to thy o'er-burden'd breast ! to ours
Anguish unutterable ! 'Tis ours he wounds,
Thou amiable friend !—whose languid eye
Ne'er rais'd a look from earth, since that sad hour
When sunk my sun ? Thou, who from earliest youth
Hast humbly sought thy God, thou art at peace :
Happy, thrice happy, on that golden shore,
Where from the tossing of these troublous waves
We soon shall land. Oh stay, affectionate,
Oh wait and welcome us ! Or, if in Heaven
Blest saints retain concern for those on earth
Held in the dearest amity, become
Thy darling sister's guardian ! As for youth,

* Mrs. Dodd's sister ; who, in the midst of our sorrows, did—
what she never did before—augment them, by dying of a heart
broken with grief for our calamity. Oh misery !

Futurity.

From childhood's dawn her dear maternal guide,
Be now, lov'd spirit, in this hour of woe,
Her angel-comfort, her support ! Alas,
What talk I of support ! thou mercy's God !
When her conduct, by thy grace inspir'd—
When all her patient gentleness and love,
Her fortitude unparallel'd, and peace,
Have thee their Author : Be the glory thine !

But say, my soul, 'midst these alarming calls,
This dread familiarity with death ;
Our common debt, from infancy's first cry
Denounc'd, expected, though its sure approach
Lurks in uncertainty's obscurest night :—
Our common debt, which babes and palsied seers,
Princes and pilgrims, equally must pay ;—
Say, canst thou feel reluctance to discharge
The claim inevitable ? Senseless he,
Who in life's gaudiest moments fondly strives
To turn his eyes unheeding from the view
Instructive. 'Midst those moments, deep it dwelt

Futurity.

On my reflecting mind *! a mind which liv'd
More in the future than the present world,
Which, frequent call'd by duty's solemn voice
From earth's low scenes, on those sublimer far
Hath ever thought delighted ; and those thoughts
Conveying to mankind, in them desires
Its real transcript, its resemblance true,
May be survey'd—the picture of itself.
For, whatsoe'er may be our earthly state,
The mind's the man. My humble labours, then,
When rest my part corporeal in the dust,
Hang up my living portrait!—And to give
Those labours all their force, summon'd I stand
By awful providence, to realise
The theoretic lessons I have taught.
And lo! compos'd, I fix my dying seal
In attestation to their truth, their power,
Felt at my heart, my inmost conscience felt ;

* Reflections on Death—Thoughts on Epiphany—Sermon on Mutual Knowledge, &c.

Futurity.

Imparting triumph o'er life's love ; o'er death
Consummate exultation ! while my soul
Longs to go forth, and pants for endless day !

But who can wonder, that amidst the woes,
Like a swoln torrent, which with frightful roar
Have burst destructive o'er me ; midst the loss
Of all things dear, Fame, Honour, Peace, and Rest ;
Amidst the cruel spoiling of my goods,
The bitterest rancour of envenom'd spite
And calumny unfeeling* ; what surprise
That my wean'd soul, above this worldly wreck,
With anxious expectation waits the call
From melancholy mourning and dim grief,
To everlasting gladness ? Powerful Hope,
And all-sufficient to sustain the soul,
Though walking through the darkest vale of woe !
Who shall disprove that Hope ? or who pretend

Numberless letters of a most unchristian, horrid, and cruel nature, were continually sent to him in the height of his distresses. Yet some of these letters were subscribed, A Lady, A Christian, or, A Christian Brother.

Futurity.

By subtle sophistry that soul to rob
Of its chief anchor, choicest privilege
And noblest consolation—"Stedfast faith,
"In great Futurity's extended scene :
"Eternity of Being?" All things round
Arise in brightest proof : I see it, feel it,
Through all my faculties, through all my powers,
Pervading irresistible. Each groan
Sent from my sorrowing heart ; each scalding tear
From my convicted eyes ; each fervent prayer
By meek repentance offer'd up to Heaven,
Asserts my immortality ! proclaims
A pardoning Deity and future world.
Nor less the thought, chill, comfortless abhorr'd
Of loath'd annihilation !—From the view
Humiliating, mean, unworthy man,
Almost unworthy reptiles,—glad I turn,
And triumph in existence ! Nay, each ill
And every mundane trouble preaches loud
The same important truth. I read it fair
And legibly engrav'd on all below ;
On all the inequalities discern'd

 Futurity.

In this perplexing, mix'd, and motley scene ;

In every rank and order of mankind * ;

Nay, in the wisest system of our laws,

Inadequate, imperfect,—and full oft

Unjust and cruel ; in this dismal jail,

And in the proudest palaces, alike

I read, and glory to trace out the marks

Irrefragably clear of future life,

Of retribution's just and equal state.

So reason urges ; while fair Nature's self,

At this sweet season †, joyfully throws in

Her attestation lovely ; bids the sun,

All-bounteous, pour his vivifying light,

To rouse and waken from their wint'ry death

The vegetable tribe ! Fresh from their graves,

At his resistless summons, start they forth,

* See Maclean's Answer to Jenyns, &c. p. 52.

† Spring. See my Poem on the Epiphany, ver. 131, &c. I would have that Poem considered, in dependence with this, as my serious thoughts on these awful subjects, in an early period of my life ; and which, in this last and dreadful one, I find no reason to alter,

Futurity.

A verdant resurrection ! In each plant,
Each flower, each tree to blooming life restor'd,
I trace the pledge, the earnest, and the type
Of man's revival, of his future rise
And victory o'er the grave,—compell'd to yield,
Her sacred, rich deposit, from the seed
Corrupt and mortal, and immortal frame
Glorious and incorruptible ; like his,
The Son of righteousness, whose living power
The mighty work shall operate ! Yes, bright source
Of spiritual life !—the immaterial world
Pervading, quickening, gladdening,—in the rays
Full-orb'd of Revelation, thy prime gift,
I view display'd, magnificent, and full,
What reason, nature, in dim darkness teach,
Though visible, not distinct : I read with joy
Man's high prerogative ; transported read
The certain, clear discovery of life
And immortality, announc'd by thee,
Parent of truth, celestial Visitant,
Fountain of all intelligence divine !

Futurity.

Of that high immortality the King,
And of that life the Author ! How man mounts,
Mounts upon angel-wings, when fief'd, secur'd
In that sublime inheritance ; when seen
As a terrestrial stranger here ; a god
Confin'd a while in prison of the flesh,
Soon, soon to soar, and meet his brother gods,
His fellows, in eternity !—How creeps,
How grovels human nature ! What a worm,
An insect of an hour, poor, sinful, sad ;
Despis'd and despicable, reptile-like,
Crawls man, his moment on his ant-hill here :
—Marking his little shining path with slime,—
If limited to earth's brief round
His painful, narrow views ! Like the poor moth,
By lights delusive to destruction led,
Still struggling oft its horrors to evade,
Still more and more involv'd ; in flames he lives
His transient, toilsome minute, and expires
In suffocating smoke.

Hume, thou art gone !

Futurity.

Amidst the catalogue of those mow'd down
By time's huge scythe, late noted *: Thou, be sure,
Wast not forgotten ! Author, thou hast gain'd
Thy vast ambition's summit : Fame was thine ;
Wealth too, beyond thy amplest wish's bound
Encompass'd thee : And lo, the pageant ends !
For who, without compassion's generous tear,
Thy mind at once capacious and humane,
Can view, to truth, to hope immortal dead ?
Thy penetrating reason, subtle, strong,
Hoodwink'd by dark infatuation's veil ;
And all thy fine and manly sense employ'd,
Ev'n on eternity's thrice awful verge,
To trifle with the wonders of a state
Respectably alarming ! of a state
Whose being gives to man—had given to thee
(Accepted by the humble hand of faith)

* See Mr. Hume's Life, written by himself ; with a letter by Dr. Smith, giving an account of his death.

Futurity.

True glory, solid fame, and boundless wealth !
Treasures that wax not old.

Oh the high blessings of humility !
Man's first and richest grace ! Of virtue, truth,
Knowledge, and exaltation, certain source,
And most abundant : Pregnant of all good ;
And, poor in show, to treasures infinite
Infallibly conducting ; her sure gift !
So, when old Hyems has deform'd the year,
We view, on fam'd Burgundia's craggy cliffs,
The slow vines, scarce distinct, on the brown earth
Neglected lie and grovelling ;—promise poor
From plant so humble, of the swelling grape
In glowing clusters purpling o'er the hills :—
When all-impregnating rolls forth the sun,
And from the mean stalk pours a luscious flood
Of juice nectareous through the laughing land !

Nervous essayist ! haply had thy pen,
Of masculine ability, this theme
Pursued intelligent ; from lowly heart
Delineating true the features mild.
Of genuine humility ; mankind,

THOUGHTS IN PRISON.

Futurity.

Now 'wilder'd by thy sophistry, had bless'd
And honour'd well thy teaching; whilst thyself
Secure had sail'd and happy; nor been cast
On pride's black rocks, or empty scorn's bleak shore!

Proud scorn, how poor and blind—how it at once
Destroys the sight, and makes us think we see!
While desperate ridicule in wit's wild hands
Implants a dangerous weapon! How it warps
From clear discernment, and conclusions just,
Ev'n captive reason's self! How gay soe'er—
(Ah misplac'd gaiety on such a theme)
In life's last hour!—on Charon's crazy bark,
On Tartarus and Elysium, and the pomp
Solemn and dreaded of dark pagans' Hell!
Thy reasoning powers knew well, full well to draw
Deductions true from fables gross as these,
By poets fancy heighten'd! Well thou knew'st
The deep intelligence, the solid truth
Conceal'd beneath the mystic tale; well knew'st
Fables like these, familiar to mankind
In every nation, every clime, through earth,
Widely disseminate, through earth proclaim'd,

Futurity.

In language strong, intelligent and clear,
“ A future state retributive :” Thou knew’st,
That in each age the wise embrac’d the truth,
And gloried in an hope, how dim soe’er,
Which thou, amidst the blaze, the noon-day blaze
Of Christian information, madly scorn’dst,
And died’st insulting ! Hail of ancient times,
Worthies and fam’d believers ! Plato, hail !
And thou, immortal Socrates, of Rome
Prime ornament and boast ! My Tully hail !
Friend and companion of my studious life ;
In eloquence and sound philosophy
Alike superlative ! with minds enlarg’d,
Yet teachable and modest, how ye sought,
You and your kindred souls,—how daily dug
For wisdom, as the labourer in the mines !
How grop’d, in fancy’s and dark fable’s night,
Your way assiduous, painful ! How discern’d
By the mind’s trembling, unassisted light,—
(Or, haply, aided by a scatter’d ray
Of distant revelation, half extinct)
The glimmer of a dawn ; the twinkling star

Futurity.

Of day-light far remote! How sigh'd sincere
For fuller information! and how long'd,
How panted for admission to that world
O'er which hung veils impervious! Sages, yes,
Immortal of your writings speaks this truth!
Hear, ye minute philosophers; ye herd
Of mean half-thinkers, who chief glory place
In boldness to arraign and judge your god,
And think that singularity is sense!
Hear, and be humbled: Socrates himself*—
And him you boast your master,—would have fall'n
In humble, thankful reverence at the feet
Of Jesus, and drank wisdom from his tongue!

Divinest Fountain! from the copious stream
Then drink we freely, gladly, plenteous draughts
Of ever-living wisdom; knowledge clear,
And otherwise attainless of that state
Supernal, glorious; where, in angel-form

* Alluding to his celebrated wish of divine illumination from some superior power.

Futurity.

And angel-blessedness *, from Death's dread pow'r,
From Sin's dominion, and from Sorrow's sense
Emancipated ever, we shall share
Complete, uninterrupted, boundless bliss ;
Incessant flowing forth from God's right hand,
Well of perennial joy†! Our moral powers,
By perfect pure benevolence enlarg'd,
With universal sympathy, shall glow
Love's flame ethereal! And from God himself,
Love's primal source, and ever-blessing sun,
Receive, and round communicate the warmth
Of gladness and of glory! Then shall rule,
From dregs of sordid interest defecate,
Immortal friendship. Then too shall we trace—
With minds congenial, and a thirst for truth
Sincere and simple, the Creator's works,
Illumin'd by the intellectual soul,
Refin'd, exalted!—Animating thought!

Futurity.

To talk with Plato, or with Newton tread
Through empyrean space the boundless track
Of stars erratic, or the comet vague.
With fiery lustre wandering through the depths
Of the blue void, exhaustless, infinite ;
While all its wonders, all its mystic use,
Expand themselves to the admiring sight !
 Descending then from the celestial range
Of planetary worlds, how blest to walk
And trace with thee, nature's true lover, Hale,
—In science sage and venerable—trace
Through vegetation's principle, the God !
Read in each tube, capillary, and root,
In every leaf and blossom, fruit and flower,
Creative energy, consummate art,
Beauty and bounty blended and complete !
Oh what a burst of wisdom and delight,
Intelligence and pleasure, to engage
Th' enraptur'd mind for ages ! 'Twere too short
Eternity itself, with reasoning quest
To search, to contemplate great nature's God
Through all his nature's works ! Sun, stars, and skies,

Futurity.

With all their vast and elemental store :
Seas, with their finny myriads : birds that wing
With glittering pinions the elastic air,
And fill the woods with music : Animals,
That feed, that clothe, that labour for their lord,
Proud man ; and half up to his reason climb,
By instinct marvellous ! Fruits, that infinite
In glow and taste refresh creation's toil ;
And flowers, that rich in scent their incense sweet
—Delicious offering both to God and man,—
Breathe free from velvet variegated hues,
And speak celestial kindness then from these
His lesser wonders—Fam'd anatomists,
Ye, who with scrupulous, but still painful search,
Pore doubtful in the dark recess of life ;
Then turn we, Cheselden, to man ; so form'd
With fear and wonder by the master-hand,
And learn we, from discovery of the prings
Of this divine automaton : the blood
In nimble currents coursing through the veins
And purple arteries ; the fibres fine ;
The tubal nerves, so ramified and quick

Futurity.

To keen sensation ; all the various parts
So complicate, yet distinct ; adapted each
Its functions with minuteness to fulfil,
While to the one great end concurring all
With harmony unvarying !—Learn we hence
The wisdom exquisite, which gave to life,
To motion, this his prime, his chief machine !
And superadded, in his love's display,
The soul's superior, intellectual rule ;
Connection wonderful ! and till that hour
Of all-expanding knowledge, to man's mind
Inexplicable still, and still unknown !

How rise upon the thought, to truth attent,
Truths new and interesting, 'midst this field
Of universal science !—Nor shall then
The spirits' seat and influence on our frame,
Gross and material, be alone involv'd
To our astonish'd view, Spirit itself,
Its nature, properties, distinctions, powers,
—Deep subject of investigation deep,
And chief resolver of man's anxious doubts ;
Though to his sight impossible, or search,

Futurity.

While darken'd by mortality—shall rise,
 Soon as he bursts the barrier of the grave,
 Clear and familiar on his sight enlarg'd :
 Seen in himself, beautify'd, and cloth'd
 With spiritual glory : in the angelic world
 Seen and admir'd. And—oh ecstatic view,
 Whose sight is perfect bliss, transforming, pure *,—
 Seen and ador'd in Thee, great first and last
 Sole, self-existing Thou the gracious cause
 Of all existence ; infinitely blest,
 Yet pleas'd with life and being to impart

* There must be sympathy in the future state, to render it uniformly complete and perfect. We can have no pleasure in God, or God in us, but from that sympathy arising from similitude. We must be made like God, to enjoy beatific vision. Bring a bad man to Heaven, with a soul encrusted and sensualised, he would have no pleasure in it ; nor could he endure the sight, any more than reptiles that grovel in a cave amidst filth and darkness, could endure the splendours of the mid-day sun. Shakspeare's description is in this view highly animated :

“ For vice, though to a radiant angel link'd,
 “ Would sate itself in a celestial bed,
 “ And prey on garbage.”

5

Futurity..

That blessing to innumerable creatures round!
Spirit of the universe, through all diffus'd,
And animating all! Dread Triune God *,
With beams exhaustless of eternal love,
Of life, of glory, from thy central throne
Shining beneficent; and kindling warm
In every being subject to thy rule,
Devotion's rapture, and thanksgiving's song;
Mellifluous songs, and hallelujahs high!

New wonders elevate! For not alone
By contemplation up to nature's God
From nature's works ascending, shall the soul
Beatified receive in future bliss
Accessions of delight through endless day:—
Lo, what a scene, engaging and profound,
Presents itself, the darkening curtain drawn—
From the high acts of Providence, display'd
In one clear view consistent; in one end
Important, grand, centering: one design

* See Maclean's Answer to Jenyns, p. 72.

Futurity.

Superlatively gracious, through the whole
Pursued invariably ; even from the hour
When pass'd the sentence on the serpent's head,
To that thrice-awful moment, when the Sou
His victor-ear o'er death and hell shall drive
Triumphant, and bolt fast the gates of time!

Unroll'd the mystic volume, we behold,
In characters of wisdom strong pourtray'd,
The rise and fall of empires ; in thy hand
Omnipotent, or instruments of good,
Or of thy justice punitive and dread
Awful dispensers ! There, of heroes, kings,
Sages, and saints, of prophets and of priests,
Thy distributions, difficult but wise,
Discerning, shall we gratefully adore :
And in the long, long chain of seeming chance,
And accidents fortuitous, shall trace
Omniscience all-combining, guiding all !
No dispensations then will seem too hard,
Through temporary ills to blissful life
Leading, though labyrinthal ! All will shine
In open day : all, o'er the mighty plan,

Futurity.

Discover Thee, with wisdom infinite
Presiding glorious : All thy stedfast truth,
And love paternal, manifest ; while falls
The prostrate world of spirits, angels, saints,
In adoration's homage 'fore thy throne !

Not to our earth, or earth's poor confines bound :
The soul dilated, glorified and free,
On seraph's wings shall soar, and drink in glad
New draughts of high delight from each survey
Of its Creator's kingdoms ! Pleas'd shall pass
From star to star ; from planetary worlds,
And systems far remote, to systems, worlds
Remoter still, in boundless depths of space ;
Each peopled with its myriads : and shall learn
The wise and strict dependence of the whole ;
Concatenation striking of thy works,
All-perfect, mighty Master ! Wonder-lost
In the vast view of systems numberless,
All regular, in one eternal round
Of beauteous order rolling ! All design'd
With skill consummate, tending to one goal ;
And manifesting all, in characters

 Futurity.

Transparent as the diamond's brilliant blaze,
 Their Sovereign Ruler's unity of will,
 His all-efficient wisdom, and his love,
 In grace and glory infinite ; the chain
 Connecting firm, and through its every link
 Transfusing life's ineffable delights !
 Oh Goodness providential ! sleepless care !
 Intent, as ever blest, to bless the whole !
 What plaudits from that whole are due, shall burst
 From full creation's universal choir !

Then, oh transporting ! shall the scheme profound,
 Heaven's labour, and of angels' anxious thought,
 Sublimest meditation ;—then shall blaze
 In fullest glory on the race redeem'd,
 Redemption's boundless mercy ;—High in Heav'n,
 To millions blest, rejoicing in its grace,
 And hymning all its bounties, shall the cross,
 Thy cross, all-conquering Saviour, be display'd,
 While seraphs veil their glories, and while men
 Thronging innumerable, prostrate fall
 Before thy feet, and to the bleeding Lamb
 Ascribe their free salvation. !—

Futurity.

'Midst that throng
Of spirits justified, and through thy blood
Cleans'd, perfected, and blest, might I be found,
To scenes so high exalted ; to such views
Ennobling brought, such intellect refin'd, .
Such light and love, such holiness and peace,
Such spheres of science, and such realms of rest ;
Ah, how I'd scorn the passage strait of death,
How doleful e'er and horrid ! How I'd look
With steadfastness unshaken through the grave,
And smile o'er all its sadness ! How I'd rise
Exulting, great Forerunner, o'er the waves
And bitterness of life ! How, smiling, court
Ev'n the fell hand of horror, to dismiss
From earth, from darkness, my delighted soul
To Heaven, to God, and everlasting day !

Teacher of truth, blest Jesu !—On the throne,
Of majesty co-equal thou who sitt'st
From all eternity in glory's blaze
With thy Almighty Father ! Thou, benign,
From bosom of that Father hast brought down
Intelligence to man of this blest state

Futurity.

Consolatory, rational ; and fraught
With every good beyond the highest reach
Of man's supreme conception ! How shall then
In equal language man his homage pay,
Or grateful laud thy goodness ! Sons of Greece,
Or ye, who in old times, of sevenfold Nile,
Proud Tyber, or the Ganges' sacred flood
Religious drank, and to your demons dark
Paid superstition's tribute ;—though I trace
Delighted, in your visions of the world
Beyond the grave, your dreams of future life,—
Proofs of that life's firm credence of your faith
In the soul's deathless nature ; yet with tears
Of human pity, humbled o'er the sense
Of human imbecility, I read
Your futile fables, puerile and poor ;
To the soul's life, to virtue's godlike love
Unanimating, useless ; while illum'd
By gospel-splendour,—else, no doubt, as dark
And worthy pity—owns my heart rejoic'd,
That gospel's eminence of wisdom, truth,
And heavenly emanation, in its traits

Futurity.

Of future life superlatively drawn !

And who could paint that life, that scene describe
Immortal, and all-glorious, from the view
Of mortals shrowded ever,—save the Son,
Who from Eternity that life enjoy'd ;
And came in condescension to reveal
A glimpse of its perfection to mankind ?

Presumption vain and arrogant in man,
To think of sketching with his weak, faint line,
A scene so much above him ! And behold
That vain presumption punish'd as it ought,
In Araby's impostor, dark and lew'd ;
Who dar'd, with temporary follies fraught,
And low self-interest, stalking in the van
Of mad ambition's route—to cheat his train,
Deluded by his darings, with the hope
Of sensual ravishment, and carnal joys
Perpetual in the Paradise of God ;
Reserv'd—for sons of murder and of lust !

Shame on the impious madness !—Nor less shame
Must truth indignant dart on those who boast
Exclusive Christianity ; yet dare,

Futurity.

Presumptuous, in their fancied penal fire
To fetter the free soul, "till the foul sins
"Done in its days of nature be purg'd out
"And burn'd away *;" unless by lucky chance
The oft-repeated mass, through potent gold,—
All sacred influence!—gain'd, unlocks the door
Of dismal prison-house, and gives the soul
Enfranchis'd up to Peter's better care!

Preposterous, weak delusion! strange reproach
To Christian sapience, and to manly sense!
But not to Christ's true gospel, and the code
Of Revelation pure; before whose light,
Resplendently informing, fables old
Like these, and vain of ignorance the birth,
Or coinage sacerdotal, in an age
Of gross Cimmerian darkness, growling hide
Their ignominious heads; as birds of night,
Reptiles, and beasts of prey before the sun
Mounting the misty hills, in splendour rob'd,
And beaming all around refulgent day!

Other, far other from that luminous code

* See Hamlet.

Futurity.

Breaks on the rational, enlighten'd mind
In perfect beauty that exalted state,
Of whose high excellence our sight hath dar'd,
How dim soe'er, to take an humble glimpse,
And peep into its wonders !—But what tongue
Of man in language adequate can tell ;
What mortal pencil worthily pourtray
That excellence, those wonders—where nor death,
Nor sin, nor pain shall enter ever ;—where,
Each ill excluded, every good shall reign ;
Where day shall ne'er decline, but ceaseless light
—The lamb's eternal lustre—blazing bless
With salutary glory ! where shall smile
One spring unvarying ; and glad nature teem
Spontaneous with exuberance of bounty ;
Where, in immortal health, the frame sublim'd,
Refin'd, exalted through the chymic grave,
In union with the soul made perfect, pure,
And to the likeness of its God transform'd,
Shall find for every sense divine employ,
Gratification ample, exquisite,
Angelical, and holy : Chief in sight,

Futurity.

In vision beatific of its God ;
In blest communion of his love ; in praise
High choral praise, strung to the golden harp
In unison eternal, with the throng,
Thousands of thousands that surround the throne,
And feel his praise, their glory, and their bliss?

There too his works constant th' adoring soul
Shall pleas'd investigate ; and constant find
Fresh well-spring of delight ; there constant share
The lov'd society and converse high
Of all the good, the wise, the truly great
Of every age and clime ; with saints and seers
Divine communication holding, rapt
Perpetually in new and deep displays.
Of wisdom boundless, and of perfect love.
Then too, oh joy ! amidst this blaze of good,
This consummation rich of highest bliss ;
Then shall we meet,—meet never mere to part,
Dear, dear departed friends ! and then enjoy
Eternal amity. My parents then,
My youth's companions * !—From my moisten'd cheeks,

* See Thoughts on the Epiphany, ver. 331, &c.

Futurity.

Dry the unworthy tear ! Where art thou, Death ?

Is this a cause for mourning ?—What a state

Of happiness exalted lies before me !

Lo, my bar'd bosom ? Strike : I court the blow :

I long, I pant for everlasting day,

For glory, immortality and God !

But, ah ! why droops my soul ? why o'er me thus

Comes a chill cloud ? Such triumph well besuits

The faithful Christian ; thee had suited well,

If haply persevering in the course,

As first thy race exultingly began.

But thou art fallen, fallen ! Oh my heart,

What dire compunction ?—sunk in foul offence

A prisoner, and condemn'd ; an outcast vile ;

Bye-word and scorn of an indignant world,

Who reprobate with horror thy ill deeds ;

Turn'd from thee loath'd, and to damnation just

Assign, unpitying, thy devoted head,

Loaded with every infamy !

Dread God

Of Justice and of Mercy ! wilt thou too,

In fearful indignation on my soul,

Futurity.

My anguish'd soul, the door of pity close,
And shut me from thee ever?—Lo! in dust,
Humiliant, prostrate, weeping 'fore thy throne—
Before thy cross, oh dying Friend of man,
Friend of repentant sinners, I confess,
And mourn my deep transgressions; as the sand
Innumerable, as the glowing crimson red;
With every aggravation, every guilt
Accumulate and burden'd! Against light,
'Gainst love and clearest knowledge perpetrate!
Stamp'd with ingratitude's most odious stain;
Ingratitude to thee, whose favouring love
Had bless'd me, had distinguish'd me with grace,
With goodness far beyond my wish or worth!
Ingratitude to man; whose partial ear
Attended to my doctrine with delight;
And from my zeal conspicuous justly claim'd
Conspicuous example!—Lord, I sink
O'erwhelm'd with self-conviction, with dismay,
With anguish and confusion past compare!
And could I weep whole seas of briny tears
In painful penitence; could I deplore

Futurity,

From my heart's aching fountain, drop by drop,
My crimes and follies ; my deep grief and shame,
For vile dishonour on thy gospel brought ;
For vile discredit to my order done ;
For deep offence against my country's laws ;
For deep offence to pity and to man.—
A patriarchal age would be too short
To speak my sorrows and lament my sins ;
Chief, as I am of sinners ! Guiltier far
Than he who, falling, at the cock's shrill call
Rose, and repented weeping : guiltier far—
I dare not say, than Judas ; for my heart
Hath ever lov'd,—could never have betray'd
Oh never, never Thee, dear Lord ! to death ;
Though cruelly, unkindly and unwise
That heart hath sacrific'd its truth and peace,
—For what a shameful, what a paltry price !—
To sin, detested sin ; and done thee wrong,
Oh blessed source of all its good, its hope !
For, though thus sunk, thus sinful, sorrowing thus,
It dare not, cannot Judas' crime commit,
Last crime,—and of thy mercy, Lord, despair !

Futurity.

But, conscious of its guilt ; contrite and plung'd
In lowest self-abjection, in the depths
Of sad compunction, of repentance due
And undissembled, to thy cross it cleaves,
And cries for—ardent cries for mercy, Lord !
Mercy, its only refuge ! Mercy, Christ !
By the red drops that in the garden gush'd
'Midst thy soul's anguish from thee ! By the drops
That down thy precious temples from the crown
Of agony distill'd ! By those that flow'd
From thy pierc'd hands and blessed feet so free ;
By all thy blood, thy sufferings, and thy death,
Mercy, oh Mercy, Jesus ! Mercy Thou,
Who erst on David, with a clement eye,
When mourning at thy footstool, deigns to look ;
Thou, who, th' adulterous Magdalen forgav'st,
When in the winning garb of penitence
Contrite she knelt, and with her flowing tears
Wash'd lowly thy lov'd feet ! Nor thou the thief,
Ev'n in the last, the bitterest hour of pain,
Refusedst, gracious ! Nor wilt thou refuse
My humble supplication, nor reject

Futurity.

My broken bleeding heart, thus offer'd up
On true contrition's altar ; while through Thee,
Only through Thee acceptance do I hope,
Thou bleeding Love ! consummate Advocate,
Prevailing Intercessor, great High Priest,
Almighty Sufferer ! Oh look pitying down !
On thy sufficient merits I depend ;
From thy unbounded mercies I implore
The look of pardon and the voice of grace,—
Grace, Grace !—Victorious Conqueror over sin,
O'er death, o'er Hell, for me, for all mankind ;
For grace I plead ; repentant at thy feet
I throw myself, unworthy, lost, undone ;
Trusting my soul, and all its dear concerns,
With filial resignation to thy will :
Grace,—still on grace my whole reliance built,
Glory to grace triumphant !—And to thee,
Dispenser bounteous of that sovereign grace !
Jesus, thou King of glory ! at thy call
I come obedient : lo, the future world
Expands its views transporting ! Lord, I come ;

Futurity.

And in that world eternal trust to 'plaud;
With all redemption's sons, thy glorious grace!

Then farewell, oh, my friends ! light o'er my grave
The green sod lay, and dew it with the tear
Of memory affectionate ! and you
—The curtain drop decisive, oh my foes,
Your rancour drop ; and, candid, as I am
Speak of me, hapless ! Then you'll speak of one
Whose bosom beat at pity's gentlest touch
From earliest infancy ; whose boyish mind
In acts humane and tender ever joy'd ;
And who,—that temper by his inmost sense
Approv'd and cultivate with constant care,—
Melted through life at Sorrow's plaintive tale,
And urg'd, compassionate with pleasure ran
To sooth the sufferer and relieve the woe !
Of one, who, though to humble fortune bred,
With splendid generosity's bright form
Too ardently enamour'd, turn'd his sight,
Deluded, from frugality's just care,
And parsimony needful ! One who scorn'd

Futurity.

Mean love of gold, yet to that power,—his scorn
Retorting vengeful;—a mark'd victim fell !
Of one, who, unsuspecting, and ill-form'd
For the world's subtleties, his bare breast bore
Unguarded, open ; and ingenuous, thought
All men ingenuous, frank and open too !
Of one, who, warm with human passions, soft
To tenderest impressions, frequent rush'd
Precipitate into the tangling maze
Of error ;—instant to each fault alive
Who, in his little journey through the world—
Misled, deluded oft, mistook his way ;
Met with bad roads and robbers, for his steps
Insidious lurking ; and by cunning craft
Of fellow-travellers sometimes deceiv'd,
Severely felt of cruelty and scorn,
Of envy, malice, and of ill report *,

* The following is a striking instance, and an alarming proof, that calumny and slander will one day grievously afflict the conscious mind.—A clergyman, with whom I had lived in much friendship, always ready to show him every proof of civility, and

Futurity.

The heavy hand oppressive ! One who brought
—From ignorance, from indiscretion blind,—
Ills numerous on his head ; but never aim'd,
Nor wish'd an ill or injury to man !
Injur'd, with cheerful readiness forgave ;
Nor for a moment in his happy heart

for whom I had much esteem, after an absence of a twelvemonth and more, sent me a line, that he was then in a dangerous state, apprehensive of a speedy death. I flew to my friend with all zeal and speed, and found him, as it seemed, in a very dangerous way. Almost as soon as he saw me he burst into tears, and clasping my hands vehemently, said, " Oh, my dear Doctor, I could not die in peace without seeing you, and earnestly imploring your pardon : For amidst all the seeming friendship I showed, I have been your bitter enemy : I have done all I could on every occasion to traduce and lessen you : envy, base envy alone, being my motive ; for I could not bear the brilliancy of your reputation, and the splendour of your abilities—Can you forgive me ? "

I was shocked ; but with great truth told him to be perfectly at peace ; that he had my most sincere forgiveness.—I did all I could to soothe his mind. He recovered, and surely must ever be my friend ! Would to God what he then suffered may be a warning to him, and to all, how they indulge such diabolical passions ; which, as being most opposite to the God who is love, cannot but sooner or later woefully distract the heart !

Futurity.

Harbour'd of malice or revenge a thought ;
Still glad and blest to avenge his foes despite
By deeds of love benevolent !—Of one—
Oh painful contradiction !—who in God,
In duty, plac'd the summit of his joy ;
Yet left that God, that blissful duty left,
Preposterous, vile deserter ! and receiv'd
A just return—"Desertion from his God,
"And consequential plunge into the depth
"Of all his present—of all human woe !"
Then hear his sufferings ! Hear (if found too faint
His feeble song to win attention) hear
And heed his dying counsel ! Cautious, shun
The rocks on which he split ; cleave close to God,
Your Father, sure Protector, and Defence :
Forsake not his lov'd service ; and your cause
Be sure he'll ne'er forsake. Initiate once
Happy and prosperous, in religion's course
Oh persevere unfainting ! Nor to vice
Or tempting folly slightest parley give :
Their black tents never enter : On the watch,
Continue unremitting, nor e'er slack

 Futurity.

The necessary guard. Trivial neglects,
 Smallest beginnings *, to the wakeful foe
 Open the door of danger ; and down sinks,
 Through the minutest leak once sprung, the ship
 In gayest and most gallant tackle trim.
 By small neglects he fell !—

Oh could ye rise

Blest ministers of peace, by his sad fall :
 Gather increase of caution and of zeal ;
 And seeing on what slippery edge ye stand,
 Of foul and fatal lapse take the more heed ;—
 With deeper thankfulness he'd bow the knee,
 While thus his fate productive, prov'd of good
 To you, of truth blest heralds ! whom he views
 With heart-felt anguish scandaliz'd, impugn'd
 By his atrocious follies : But for that
 Not honour'd less, or honourable, if rous'd,

* Principiis obsta : sero medicina paratur,
 Cum mala per longas convaluere moras.
 Sed propera ; nec te venturas differ in horas.
 Qui non est hodie, cras minus aptus erit.

Futurity.

Ev'n by his errors, wisely you maintain
Your high profession's dignity, and look
With single eye intent on the great work
Thrice holy, of your calling ; happiest work
Of mortals here, " Salvation of men's souls."

Oh envied pastor, who thus occupied
Looks down on low preferment's distant views
Contemptible ; nor e'er his plotting mind
To little, mean servilities enslaves ;
Forgetting duty's exercise sublime,
And his attachments heavenly ! Who nor joins
In frivolous converse on the rise of this,
Nor prospects flattering of that worldly clerk ;
Strange inconsistency ! marching aloft
With step superior, and ambition's paw,
To dignity's wish'd summit !—Nor allows
Envious, or spreads malicious the low tales
Diminishing of brethren, who by zeal,
Or eminence of merit in the cause,
The common cause of Christ distinguish'd shine :
Of futile politics and party rage
Who, heedless, ever for the powers that be

Futurity.

In meek sincerity implores; and lives
Only to spread around the good, the peace,
The truth, the happiness, his open heart
Innocuous possesses, as the gift
Of him the God of peace he serves and loves!

Much envied pastor! Ah, ye men of God,
Who crowd the levee, theatre, or court;
Foremost in each amusement's idle walk;
Of vice and vanity the sportive scorn,
The vaunted pillars;—ah that ye were all
Such happy, envied pastors! how mankind
With eyes of reverence would devoutly look,
How would yourselves with eyes of pleasure look,
On characters so uniform! while now,
What view is found less pleasing to the sight!

Nor wonderful, my aged friends! For none
Can inward look complacent where a void
Presents its desolations drear and dark.
Hence 'tis your turn (incapable to bear
Reflection's just resentment) your lull'd minds
To infantine amusements, and employ
The hours,—short hours, indulgent Heaven affords

Futurity.

For purposes most solemn,—in the toil
Of busy trifling; of diversions poor,
Which irritate as often as amuse :
Passions most low and sordid ! With due shame,
With sorrow I regret—Oh pardon me
This mighty wrong !—that frequent by your side
Silent I've sat, and with a pitying eye
Your follies mark'd, and unadmonish'd left,
Though tenderly lamenting ! Yet, at last,
—If haply not too late my friendly call
Strike on dead ears, oh profit by that call !
And to the grave approaching, its alarms
Weigh with me all considerate ! Brief time
Advances quick in tread ; few hours and dark
Remain : those hours in frivolous employ
Waste not impertinent ; they ne'er return !
Nor deem it dulness to stand still and pause
When dread eternity hath claims so high,
Oh be those claims fulfill'd !

Nor my young friends,
Whom life's gay sunshine warms with laughing joy,

Futurity.

Pass you those claims unheeding !—In the bud
Of earliest rose oft have I sorrowing seen
The canker-worm lurk blighting ; oft ere noon,
The tulip have beheld drop its proud head
In eminent beauty open'd to the morn !
In youth, in beauty, in life's outward charms
Boast not self-flattering ; virtue has a grace,
Religion has a power, which will preserve
Immortal your true excellence ! O give
Early and happy your young hearts to God,
And God will smile in countless blessings on you !
Nor, captivate by fashion's idle glare, .
And the world's shows delusive, dance the maze,
The same dull round, fatiguing and fatigu'd,
Till, discontented, down in folly's seat
And disappointment's, worthless, toil'd, you sink,
Despising and despis'd ! Your gentle hearts
To kind impressions yet susceptible,
Will amiably hear a friend's advice ;
And if, perchance, amidst the giddy whirl
Of circling folly, his unheeded tongue
Hath whisper'd vanity, or not announc'd

Futurity.

Truth's salutary dictates to your ears,
Forgive the injury, my friends belov'd;
And see me now, solicitous & atone
That and each fault, each error; with full eyes
Entreating you, by all your hopes and fears,
By all your dear anxieties, by all
You hold in life most precious, to attend,
To listen to his lore! to seek for bliss
In God, in piety; in hearts devote
To duty and to Heav'n! and seeking thus
The treasure is your own, Angels on earth,
Thus pure and good, soon will you mount, and live
Eternal angels with your Father—God!

Of admonition due, just self-contempt,
And frank expostulation's honest charge,
The needful debt thus paid; haste thou, my song,
As hastes my life,—brief shadow,—to its close!
Then farewell, oh my friends, most valued! bound
By consanguinity's endearing tie,
Or friendship's noble service, manly love,
And generous obligations! See, in all
—And spare the tear of pity—Heaven's high will

Futurity.

Ordaining wise and good. I see, I own
His dispensation, howsoever harsh,
To my hard heart, to my rebellious soul
Needful and salutary! His dread rod
Paternal, lo, I kiss; and to the stroke
Severe, submissive thankfully resign
It weans me from the world; it proves how vain,
How poor the life of erring man! hath taught,
Experimentally hath taught, to look
With scorn, with triumph upon death;—to wish
The moment come!—Oh were that moment come,
When, launch'd from all that's sinful here below,
Securely I shall sail along the tide
Of glorious eternity! My friends,
Belov'd and honour'd, oh that we were launch'd,
And sailing happy there, where shortly all
Must one day sail! Oh that in peaceful port
We all were landed! all together safe
In everlasting amity and love
With God, our God; our pilot through the storms
Of this life's sea:—But why the frivolous wish?
Set a few suns, a few more days decline,

Futurity.

And I shall meet you.—Oh the gladsome hour !
Meet you in glory,—nor with flowing tears
Afflicted drop my pen, and sigh Adieu !

END OF THE FIFTH WEEK.

* * In a Postscript to a friend, the Author writes thus :—
I forgot to request my good friend to tell Mr. Hanway, that in one of my little melancholy Poems, written in this dreary place, I have made such mention of him as I think his attention to the improvement of jails demands :—That I earnestly press him, as a Christian and a Man, to pursue that improvement with zeal :—That much, very much is to be done :—And that while the state of prisons remains as it is, the legislature has some reason to charge itself with the greater robberies, &c. committed : For the offenders for petty crimes are here hardened in almost every species of vice, and turned out, necessary plunderers of the public, from the depravity of their unaltered disposition, and the deficiency of proper employment. I have felt much on this subject since I have been here, and expressed something of it in the Poem, Week the Third. See page 66, 67, &c.

PIECES

FOUND AMONGST THE AUTHOR'S PAPERS IN PRISON,

WITH

HIS LAST PRAYER.



I. THE ADMONITION.

AFFLICTED prisoner, whosoe'er thou art,
To this lone room unhappily confin'd ;
Be thy first business here to search thy heart,
And probe the deep corruptions of thy mind !

Struck with the foul transgressions thou hast wrought,
With sin,—the source of all thy worldly woe ;
To shame, to sorrow, to conviction brought,
Oh, fall before the throne of mercy low !

With true repentance pour thy soul in prayer,
And fervent plead the Saviour's cleansing blood ;
Faith's ardent cry will pierce the Father's ear,
And Christ's a plea which cannot be withstood !

II. SCRIPTURE-PENITENTS.

A FRAGMENT.

FIRST in the list of penitents we place
The sinful parent of our sinful race ;
Who, by temptation foil'd, and man's first foe,
“ Brought death into the world, and all our woe ! ”

Transgression's debt how deeply does he pay !
Depriv'd of innocence ; to death a prey ;
From Paradise expell'd ; to toil assign'd, —
Toil of the fainting frame and sick'ning mind !
And doom'd to shed, for near a thousand years,
O'er fall'n descendants penitential tears !

Thus seiz'd the triple league * on mortal man,
And thus, Repentance, thy sad reign began.

Yet, awful Power ! how blest beneath thy sway,
Who feel Contrition's dictates, and obey !
Their vicious deviations who detest,
And hold Faith's cross, all humbled, to their breast !
From God's lov'd presence then they need not fly † ;
Nor ope in wrath the flood-gates of the sky :

* Sin, Sorrow, and Death.

† As Cain, Gen. iv. 14, 16,

A Fragment.

For since to man perfection was deny'd,
By thee his deep demerits are supply'd ;
And, led by thee a suppliant to the throne,
The God of mercy looks with pity down,
Smiles on the mourner, and delights to prove
How free his grace, and how triumphant love !

Eternal proof ! See, bath'd in floods of tears,
Where David foremost in thy train appears :
How deep his crime, the prophet pictures well ;
How deep his penitence, those sorrows tell !
That, whether to deplore the crime, or bless,
We stand suspended ; since its evil less,
Less bright his soul's ingenuous grief had shone,
And less at once his comfort, and our own !

Hear, like a torrent how his sorrows roll,
Conviction's tempest tearing up his soul !
Hear, sad and solemn, to the mournful strings,
In trembling anguish, how he weeps and sings !

“ Mercy, oh mercy, Lord ! with humble heart !

“ For thy known pity's sake, mercy I pray !

“ Boundless in tender mercies as Thou art,

“ Take, Lord ! oh take my foul offence away !

“ Oh, from my loathsome guilt, wash, cleanse my soul,

“ Remove, dear Father, each defiling stain :

“ Guilty, oh, guilty, Lord ! I own the whole ;

“ I see, I feel it ; all excuse is vain.

A Fragment.

“ Against Thee, Lord ! ev'n Thee, have I transgress'd ;

“ Lo, self-convicted, I before Thee fall !

“ Just are thy words ; their truth is thus confess'd ;

“ Just are thy judgments ! Sinners are we all.

“ Prone to offend, or ere to birth I came,

“ My mother, when conceiving, gave me guilt ;

“ Shapen in sin was my corrupted frame,

“ When in the womb that wond'rous frame was built.

“ But thou, of purer eyes than guilt to view,

“ Thou wilt accept the soul's sincere desire ;

“ Pardon the past, the humble heart renew,

“ And wisdom by thy secret one inspire.

“ Then listen to my cry ; and oh, my God,

“ Purge me with hyssop, and I pure shall grow ;

“ Wash me, foul leper, in the mystic blood,

“ And whiter I shall be than whitest snow.

“ Again the voice of gladness let me hear,

“ Thy voice of pardoning love, for it is sweet ;

“ The soul dejected so shall thou uprear,—

“ The worm which, crush'd, lies trembling at thy feet.

“ Hide from my sins—the objects of thy hate,—

“ Oh, hide thy face, and blot them from thy view :

“ A clean heart, God of grace, in me create,

“ And a right spirit in my soul renew !

A Fragment.

- “ From thy lov'd presence let me not be driven ;
“ Let me not lose thy blessed spirit's aid ;
“ Again the joy of thy salvation giv'n,
“ Uphold, support, sustain my heart dismay'd.
- “ Then, of thy pardoning mercy satisfy'd,
“ Thy pardoning mercy loud will I proclaim :
“ So shall transgressors, taught by me, confide
“ In thy compassions ; turn, and bless thy name.
- “ Ah ! my soul shudders !—From the guilt of blood,
“ Oh, from blood-guiltiness deliver me !
“ Oh God, deliver—my salvation's God,
“ And praise unceasing will I pay to thee.
- “ Permit my lips, now clos'd by guilt and shame,
“ Thy pardoning love, Jehovah, to express ;
“ Then to thy list'ning world I'll tell thy name,
“ Proclaim thy praise, and sing thy righteousness,
- “ For crimes like mine no offerings can atone ;
“ The gift of outward sacrifice is vain :
“ Could these avail, before thy righteous throne,
“ Whole hecatombs I gladly would have slain.
- “ The contrite spirit and the sighs sincere,
“ Which from the broken bleeding heart arise,
“ To thee more pleasing sacrifices are ;
“ Are gifts, my God, which thou wilt not despise.

A Fragment.

“ Hear then, and save ! and to my people, Lord,

“ Thy saving mercy graciously extend !

“ Oh let our Zion live in thy regard ;

“ The walls of our Jerusalem defend !

‘ So shall the righteous to thy temple go ;

“ And joyful bring their offering and their praise :

“ So shall the blood of lambs in plenty flow,

“ And incense on thy altar copious blaze *.”

With joy, with grief, the penitent I see,
Offending Heav’n, yet Heav’n-absolv’d for me !

Oh while, like his, I feel my guilt and shame,

Be my repentance and my grief the same !

Then shall the truth which cheer’d his heart be mine ;

Thy God has pardon’d thee, and life is thine.

But hark, my soul, what melancholy sound

Re-echoes from the dungeon’s dark profound !

Hear, sympathetic hear : A King complains,

Fall’n from his throne, a prisoner, and in chains !

“ God of the world, at length thy rule I own,

“ And prostrate fall before thy boundless throne :

“ The power resistless, trembling I confess :

“ In threat’nings awful, but in love no less !

* See Psalm 51, and Christian’s Magazine, Vol. III. p. 134.

A Fragment.

" Oh what a blessing has that love assign'd,
 " By penitence to heal the wounded mind !
 " By penitence to sinners, who like me,
 " More than th' unnumber'd sands that shore the sea ;
 " My crimes acknowledge ; which, of crimson dye,
 " In all their scarlet horrors meet my eye !

" Oh eye, unworthy of the light of Heav'n :
 " Oh sins too mountainous to be forgiv'n :
 " Oh rebel to the law and love divine,
 " How justly God's severest vengeance thine !
 " But oh, I bend my heart's obedient knee,
 " In supplication, Lord, for grace from Thee !
 " Yes, I have sinn'd, and I confess the whole—
 " Forgive me then, nor cast away my soul !
 " Save me from evil,—from thine anger save,
 " And snatch me from the dark, untimely grave !

" Friend of the contrite, Thou wilt pardon give :
 " A monument of mercy I shall live !
 " And worthless as I am, for ever prove,
 " That true repentance leads to saving love !
 " That true repentance tunes to praise the heart,
 " And in the choir of Heaven shall bear an ample
 " part * ! "

* See Prayer of Manasseh, in the Apocrypha, next to the first book of Maccabees ; and compare 2 Chron. xxxiii. 21, &c.

A Fragment.

Thus, by affliction's deep correction taught,
Manasseh to the Lord for mercy sought :
By the kind chastening of a Father's rod,
Brought to the knowledge of himself and God
Happy affliction, for such knowledge given ;
And blest the dungeon which led thus to Heaven !

III. REFLECTIONS.

(UNFINISHED.)

HERE, seclude from worldly pleasure,
In this doleful place confin'd
Come, and let's improve the leisure ;
Meditate, my thoughtful mind !

Soul alike and body sharing,
How have I the one forgot !
While for t'other only caring ;
Lo ! my miserable lot !

Yet the one I so much cherish,
Doom'd to death when giv'n to life,
Soon, perhaps, must sink and perish,
Dust to dust—must end the strife !

From a tedious tour returning,
Into distant foreign land,
How my anxious heart is burning
News of home to understand !

* * * * *

TO MY FRIENDS,

ESPECIALLY OF

THE CHARITABLE SOCIETIES,

ON THEIR SOLICITUDE.

Alas, my lov'd friends ! why all this care for one
To life so lost, so totally undone,
Whose meat and drink are only bitter tears,
Nights pass'd in sorrow, mornings wak'd to cares ;
Whose deep offence sits heavy on his soul,
And thoughts self-torturing in deep tumult roll !

Could you, by all your labours so humane,
From this dread prison his deliverance gain ;
Could you, by kind exertions of your love,
To generous pardon royal mercy move,
Where should he fly ! where hide his wretched head,
With shame so cover'd, so to honour dead !

Spare then the task, and, as he longs to die,
Set free the captive,—let his spirit fly,
Enlarg'd and happy, to his native sky !
Not doubting mercy from his grace to find,
Who bled upon the cross for all mankind.

}

On their Solicitude.

But if it must not be,—if Heaven's high will
Ordains him yet a duty to fulfil,
Oh may each breath, while God that breath shall spare,
Be yours in gratitude, be Heaven's in prayer !
Deep as his sin, and low as his offence,
High be his rise through humblest penitence !

While, life or death, mankind at least shall learn
From his sad story and your kind concern,
That works of mercy, and a zeal to prove
By sympathetic aid the heart of love,
On earth itself a sure reward obtain ;
Nor e'er fall pity's kindly drops in vain !

I live a proof ! and dying, round my urn
Affliction's family will crowd and mourn :
“ Here rests our friend,” if, weeping o'er my grave,
They cry—'tis all the epitaph I crave.

THE
CONVICT'S ADDRESS

TO HIS
UNHAPPY BRETHREN:

DELIVERED IN THE CHAPEL OF NEWGATE, ON FRIDAY,
JUNE 6, 1777.

BY WILLIAM DODD, L.L.D.



Acknowledge my faults: and my Sin is ever before me.

PSALM li. 3.

TO THE
REVEREND MR. VILLETTE;
ORDINARY OF NEWGATE.

Reverend Sir,

THE following Address owes its present public appearance to you. I read it to you after it was composed; and you thought it proper to be delivered, as was intended. You heard it delivered, and are pleased to think that its publication will be useful.—To a poor abject worm, like myself, this is a sufficient inducement to that publication; and I heartily pray God, that in your hands it may frequently and effectually administer to the instruction and comfort of the miserable.

I am, Dear SIR,

With my sincerest thanks for your humane
and friendly attention,

Your truly sorrowful
and much afflicted Brother in Christ,

WILLIAM DODD.

Friday, June 6, 1777.

AN ADDRESS, &c.

My dear and unhappy Fellow Prisoners,

CONSIDERING my peculiar circumstances and situation, I cannot think myself justified, if I do not deliver to you, in sincere Christian love, some of my serious thoughts on our present awful state.

In the sixteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, you read a memorable story respecting Paul and Silas, who, for preaching the Gospel, were cast by magistrates into prison, ver. 23.—and, after having received many stripes, were committed to the jailor, with a strict charge to keep them safely. Accordingly he thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks. At midnight Paul and Silas, supported by the testimony of a good conscience, prayed and sung prayers to God, and the prisoners heard them; and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's chains were loosed. The keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, in the greatest distress, as might well be imagined, drew his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled. But Paul cried with a loud voice, Do thyself no harm, for we are all here.—The keeper calling for a light, and finding his prisoners thus freed from their bonds by the imperceptible agency of divine power, was irresistibly convinced that these men were not offenders against the law, but martyrs to the truth: he sprang in therefore, and

came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out and said, "Sirs, What must I do to be saved?"

"What must I do to be saved?" is the important question, which it becomes every human being to study, from the first hour of reason to the last; but which we, my fellow-prisoners, ought to consider, with particular diligence and intenseness of meditation. Had it not been forgotten or neglected by us, we had never appeared in this place. A little time for recollection and amendment is yet allowed us by the mercy of the law. Of this little time let no particle be lost. Let us fill our remaining life with all the duties which our present condition allows us to practise. Let us make one earnest effort for salvation! And oh! heavenly Father, who desireth not the death of a sinner, grant that this effort may not be in vain.

To teach others what they must do to be saved, has long been my employment and profession. You see with what confusion and dishonour I now stand before you—no more in the pulpit of instruction, but on this humble seat with yourselves. You are not to consider me now as a man authorised to form the manners, or direct the conscience, and speaking with the authority of a pastor to his flock—I am here guilty, like yourselves, for a capital offence; and sentenced, like yourselves, to public and shameful death. My profession, which has given me stronger convictions of my duty than most of you can be supposed to have attained, and has extended my views to the consequences of wickedness farther than your observation is likely to have reached, has loaded my sins with peculiar aggravations; and I entreat you to join your prayers with mine, that my sorrow may be proportionate to my guilt!

I am now, like you, inquiring what I must do to be saved! and stand here to communicate to you what that inquiry suggests. Hear me with attention, my fellow-prisoners; and in your melancholy hours of retirement, consider well what I offer to you from the sincerity of my good will, and from the deepest conviction of a penitent heart.

Salvation is promised to us Christians, on the terms of Faith, Obedience, and Repentance. I shall therefore endeavour to show how, in the short interval between this moment and death, we may exert faith, perform obedience, and exercise repentance, in a manner which our heavenly Father may, in his infinite mercy, vouchsafe to accept.

1. Faith is the foundation of all Christian virtue. It is that, without which it is impossible to please God. I shall therefore consider, first, how faith is to be particularly exerted by us in our present state.

Faith is a full and undoubting confidence in the declarations made by God in the Holy Scriptures; a sincere reception of the doctrines taught by our blessed Saviour; with a firm assurance that he died to take away the sins of the world, and that we have, each of us, a part in the boundless benefits of the universal Sacrifice.

To this faith we must have recourse at all times, but particularly if we find ourselves tempted to despair. If thoughts arise in our minds, which suggest that we have sinned beyond the hope of pardon, and that therefore it is vain to seek for reconciliation by repentance, we must remember how God willeth that every man should be saved, and that those who obey his call, however late, shall not be rejected. If we are tempted to think that the injuries we have done are unrepaired, and therefore repentance is vain, let us remember that the reparation, which is impossible is not required; that sincerely to will, is to do, in the sight of Him to whom all hearts are open; and that what is deficient in our endeavours, is supplied by the merits of Him who died to redeem us.

Yet let us be careful, lest an erroneous opinion of the all-sufficiency of our Saviour's merits lull us into carelessness and security. His merits are indeed all-sufficient! But he has prescribed the terms on which they are to operate. He died to save sinners, but to save only those sinners that repent. Peter, who denied him, was forgiven; but he obtained his pardon by weeping bitterly. They who live in perpetual regularity of duty, and are free from any gross or visible transgression, are yet but unprofitable servants: What then are we, whose crimes are hastening us to the grave before our time?—Let us work with fear and trembling, but still let us endeavour to work out our salvation. Let us hope without presumption; let us fear without desperation, and let our faith animate us to that which we were to consider.

Secondly, "Sincere Obedience to the laws of God." Our obedience, for the short time yet remaining, is restrained to a narrow circle. Those duties which are called social and relative, are for the most part out of our power. We can contribute very little to the general happiness of mankind, while on those,

whom kindred and friendship have allied to us, we have brought disgrace and sorrow. We can only benefit the public by an example of contrition, and fortify our friends against temptation by warning and admonition.

The obedience left us now to practise is, " submission to the will of God, and calm acquiescence in his wisdom and his justice." We must not allow ourselves to repine at those miseries which have followed our offences, but suffer, with silent humility and resigned patience, the punishment which we deserve; remembering that, according to the apostle's decision, no praise is due to them who bear with patience to be buffeted for their fault.

When we consider the wickedness of our past lives, and the danger of having been summoned to the final judgment without preparation, we shall, I hope, gradually rise so much above the gross conceptions of human nature, as to return thanks to God for what once seemed the most dreadful of all evils—our detection and conviction! We shrink back by immediate and instinctive terror from the public eye, turned as it is upon us with indignation and contempt. Imprisonment is afflictive, and ignominious death is fearful! But let us compare our condition with that which our actions might reasonably have incurred. The robber might have died in the act of violence, by lawful resistance; the man of fraud might have sunk into the grave while he was enjoying the gain of his artifice,—and where then had been our hope? We have now leisure for thought; we have opportunities of instruction; and, whatever we suffer from offended laws, may yet reconcile ourselves to God, who, if we sincerely seek him, will assuredly be found.

But how are we to seek the Lord? By the way which he himself hath appointed; by humble, fervent, and frequent prayer. Some hours of worship are appointed us; let us duly observe them. Some assistance to our devotion is supplied; let us thankfully accept it. But let us not rest in formality and prescription; let us call upon God night and day. When, in the review of the times which we have past, any offence arises to our thoughts, let us humbly implore forgiveness; and for those faults (and many they are and must be) which we cannot recollect, let us solicit mercy in general petitions. But it must be our constant care that we pray not merely with our lips; but that when we lament our sins, we are really humbled

in self-abhorrence* ; and that, when we call for mercy, we raise our thoughts to hope and trust in the goodness of God, and the merits of our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ.

The reception of the holy sacrament, to which we shall be called, in the most solemn manner, perhaps a few hours, before we die, is the highest act of Christian worship. At that awful moment it will become us to drop for ever all worldly thoughts, to fix our hopes solely upon Christ, whose death is represented, and to consider ourselves as no longer connected with mortality.—And, possibly, it may please God to afford us some consolation, some secret intimations of acceptance and forgiveness. But these radiations of favour are not always felt by the sincerest penitents. To the greater part of those whom angels stand ready to receive, nothing is granted in this world beyond rational hope ;—and with hope founded, on promise, we may well be satisfied.

But such promises of salvation are made only to the penitent. It is requisite then that we consider,

Thirdly, “How Repentance is to be exercised.” Repentance, in the general state of Christian life, is such a sorrow for sin as produces a change of manners, and an amendment of life. It is that disposition of mind, by which he who stole steals no more ; by which the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness, and doth that which is lawful and right. And to the man thus reformed it is expressly promised, that he shall save his soul alive†. Of this repentance the proofs are visible, and the reality certain, always to the penitent, and commonly to the church with which he communicates ; because the state of the mind is discovered by the outward actions. But of the repentance which

* See Job, chap. xlii, ver. 6.

† There cannot be a stronger exemplification of this idea than the conduct of the jailor, who uttered the question with which we commenced our inquiry—What shall I do to be saved?—What a change of mind and manners was wrought in him by the power of God? Read Acts, chap. xvi.

our condition requires and admits, no such evidence can appear, for to us many crimes and many virtues are made impossible by confinement; and the shortness of the time which is before us, gives little power even to ourselves, of distinguishing the efforts of terror from those of conviction; of deciding whether our present sorrow for sin proceeds from abhorrence of guilt, or dread of punishment; whether the violence of our inordinate passions be totally subdued by the fear of God, or only crushed and restrained by the temporary force of present calamity.

Our repentance is like that of other sinners on the death-bed; but with this advantage, that our danger is not greater, and our strength is more; our faculties are not impaired by weakness of body. We come to the great work, not withered by pains, nor clouded by the fumes of disease, but with minds capable of continued attention, and with bodies, of which we need have no care! We may therefore better discharge this tremendous duty, and better judge of our own performance.

Of the efficacy of a death-bed repentance many have disputed; but we have no leisure for controversy. Fix in your minds this decision, "Repentance is a change of the heart, of an evil to a good disposition." When that change is made, repentance is complete. God will consider that life as amended, which would have been amended, if he had spared it. Repentance in the sight of man, even of the penitent, is not known but by its fruits; but our Creator sees the fruit in the blossom, or the seed. He knows those resolutions which are fixed, those conversions which would be permanent; and will receive them who are qualified by holy desires for works of righteousness, without exacting from them those outward duties which the shortness of their lives hindered them from performing.

Nothing therefore remains, but that we apply with all our speed, and with all our strength, to rectify our desires and purify our thoughts; that we set God before us in all his goodness and terrors; that we consider him as the Father and the Judge of all the earth; as a Father, desirous to save; as a Judge, who cannot pardon unrepented iniquity; that we fall down before himself condemned, and excite in our hearts an intense detestation of those crimes which have provoked him; with vehemence and steady resolutions, that if life were granted us, it

should be spent hereafter in the practice of our duty*; that we pray the Giver of grace to strengthen and impress these holy thoughts, and to accept our repentance, though late, and in its beginnings violent; that we improve every good motion by diligent prayer; and having declared and confirmed† our faith by the holy communion,—we deliver ourselves into his hands, in firm hope, that he who created and redeemed us will not suffer us to perish.—Rom. v. 8. viii. 32.

The condition, without which forgiveness is not to be obtained, is that we forgive others. There is always a danger lest men, fresh from a trial in which life has been lost, should remember with resentment and malignity the prosecutor, the witnesses, or the judges. It is indeed scarce possible, that with all the prejudices of an interest so weighty and so affecting, the convict should think otherwise than that he has been treated, in some part of the process, with unnecessary severity. In this opinion he is perhaps singular, and therefore probably mistaken. But there is no time for disquisition: we must try to find the shortest way to peace. It is easier to forgive than to reason aright. He that has been injuriously or unnecessarily harassed, has one opportunity more of proving his sincerity, by forgiving the wrong, and praying for his enemy.

It is the duty of a penitent to repair, so far as he has

* See 2 Cor. chap. v. 14, 15.

† I would have this expression to be particularly attended to. While as a dying man, and with all possible sincerity of soul, I add, that, if I could wish to declare my faith, I know not of any words in which I could do it so well, and so perfectly to my satisfaction, as in the communion service of our church; and if I would wish to confirm that faith, I know not of any appointed method so thoroughly adapted to that end of participation in that communion itself.—See particularly in this service, the Exhortation, Confession, Prayer beginning, "We do not presume," &c.—Consecration—and Prayer after receiving, "O Lord and heavenly Father," &c.—Convicts should diligently and repeatedly read over the service before they communicate.

the power, the injury which he has done. What we can do, is commonly nothing more than to leave the world an example of contrition. On the dreadful day, when the sentence of the law has its full force, some will be found to have affected a shameless bravery, or negligent intrepidity. Such is not the proper behaviour of a convicted criminal. To rejoice in tortures is the privilege of a martyr; to meet death with intrepidity is the right only of innocence, if in any human being innocence could be found. Of him whose life is shortened by his crimes, the last duties are humility and self-abasement. We owe to God sincere repentance; we owe to man the appearance of repentance.—We ought not to propagate an opinion, that he who lived in wickedness can die with courage. If the serenity or gaiety with which some men have ended a life of guilt were unfeigned, they can be imputed only to ignorance or stupidity, or, what is more horrid, to voluntary intoxication:—if they were artificial and hypocritical, they are acts of deception, the useless and unprofitable crimes of pride unmortified, and obstinacy unsubdued.

There is yet another crime possible, and, as there is reason to believe, sometimes committed in the last moment, on the margin of eternity. Men have died with a stedfast denial of crimes, of which it is very difficult to suppose them innocent. By what equivocation or reserve they may have reconciled their consciences to falsehood, if their consciences were at all consulted, it is impossible to know; but if they thought that, when they were to die, they paid their legal forfeit, and that the world had no farther demand upon them; that therefore they might, by keeping their own secrets, try to leave behind them a disputable reputation; and that the falsehood was harmless because none were injured,—they had very little considered the nature of society. One of the principal parts of national felicity arises from a wise and impartial administration of justice. Every man reposes upon the tribunals of his country the stability of possession, and the serenity of life. He therefore who unjustly exposes the courts of judicature to suspicion, either of partiality or error, not only does an injury to those who dispense the laws, but diminishes the public confidence in the laws themselves, and shakes the foundation of public tranquillity.

For my own part, I confess, with deepest compunction, the crime which has brought me to this place; and admit the justice of my sentence, while I am sinking under its se-

verity. And I earnestly exhort you, my fellow-prisoners, to acknowledge the offences which have been already proved; and to bequeath to our country that confidence in public justice, without which there can be neither peace nor safety.

As few men suffer for their first offences, and most convicts are conscious of more crimes than have been brought within judicial cognizance, it is necessary to inquire how far confession ought to be extended. Peace of mind, or desire of instruction, may sometimes demand, that to the minister, whose counsel is requested, a long course of evil life should be discovered; but of this every man must determine for himself.—To the public, every man who departs from life, is obliged to confess those acts which have brought, or may bring, unjust suspicion upon others; and to convey such information as may enable those who have suffered losses to obtain restitution.

Whatever good remains in our power we must diligently perform. We must prevent, to the utmost of our power, all the evil consequences of our crimes; we must forgive all who have injured us: we must, by fervency of prayer, and constancy in meditation, endeavour to repress all worldly passions, and generate in our minds that love of goodness and hatred of sin, which may fit us for the society of heavenly minds. And, finally, we must commend and intrust our souls to Him who died for the sins of men; with earnest wishes and humble hopes, that he will admit us with the labourers who entered the vineyard at the last hour, and associate us with the thief whom he pardoned on the cross!

To this great end you will not refuse to unite with me, on bended knees, and with humbled hearts, in fervent prayer to the throne of grace! May the Father of mercy hear our supplications, and have compassion upon us!

“O Almighty Lord God, the righteous Judge of all the earth, who in thy providential justice dost frequently inflict severe vengeance upon sinners in this life, that thou mayest, by their sad examples, effectually deter others from committing the like heinous offences; and that they themselves, truly repenting of their faults, may escape the condemnation of hell,—look down in mercy upon us, thy sorrowful servants, whom thou hast suffered to become the unhappy objects of offended justice in this world.

“Give us a thorough sense of all those evil thoughts,

words, and works, which have so provoked thy patience, that thou hast been pleased to permit this public and shameful judgment to fall upon us; and grant us such a portion of grace and godly sincerity, that we may heartily confess and unfeignedly repent of every breach of those most holy laws and ordinances, which if a man do, he shall even live in them.

“Let no root of bitterness and malice, no habitual and deadly sin, either of omission or commission, remain undisturbed in our hearts! But enable us to make our repentance universal, without the least flattering or deceitful reserve, so that we may clear our consciences before we close our eyes.

“And now that thou hast brought us within the view of our long home, and made us sensible that the time of our dissolution draweth near, endow us, we humbly pray thee, O gracious Father, with such Christian fortitude, that neither the terrors of thy present dispensations, nor the remembrance of our former sins, may have power to sink our spirits into a despondency of thy everlasting mercies in the adorable Son of thy love.

“Wean our thoughts and affections, good Lord, from all the vain and delusive enjoyments of this transitory world, that we may not only with patient resignation submit to the appointed stroke of death, but that our faith and hope may be so elevated, that we may conceive a longing desire to be dissolved from these our earthly tabernacles, and to be with Christ, which is far better than all the happiness we can wish for besides!

“And in a due sense of our own extraordinary want of forgiveness at thy hands, and of our utter unworthiness of the very least of all thy favours—of the meanest crumbs which fall from thy table—O blessed Lord Jesus, make us so truly and universally charitable, that in an undissembled compliance with thy own awful command and most endearing example, we may both freely forgive and cordially pray for our most inveterate enemies, persecutors, and slanderers! Forgive them, O Lord, we beseech thee—turn their hearts, and fill them with thy love!

“Thus may we humbly trust, our sorrowful prayers and tears will be acceptable in thy sight: thus shall we be qualified, through Christ, to exchange this dismal bodily confinement (and these uneasy fetters) for the glorious liberty of the sons of God; and thus shall our legal doom upon earth be

Changed into a comfortable declaration of mercy in the highest heavens;—and all through thy most precious and all-sufficient merits. O blessed Saviour of mankind!—who with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, livest and reignest ever, One God, world without end. Amen *.”

* See Rossell's Prisoner's Director;—a work of some merit—, and which I have endeavoured, in my melancholy hours of leisure, to revise, and, (I humbly hope) improve; and mean to leave behind me, in the hands of the ordinary, as a small testimony of my sincere, but very weak, endeavours for the best welfare of unhappy men in confinement; to whom I have written a general Address, to be prefixed to the new edition of Rossell.

DR. DODD'S LAST PRAYER;

Written June 27.

IN THE NIGHT PREVIOUS TO HIS SUFFERING.

GREAT and glorious Lord God! Thou Father of Mercies, and God of all Comfort! a poor and humble publican stands trembling in thy awful presence; and, under the deep sense of innumerable transgressions, scarce dares so much as to lift up his eyes, or to say, "Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner!"

For I have sinned, oh Lord! I have most grievously sinned against Thee; sinned against light, against conviction; and by a thousand, thousand offences, justly provoked thy wrath and indignation! My sins are peculiarly aggravated, and their burden more than ordinary oppressive to my soul, from the sight and sense I have had of thy love, and from the high and solemn obligations of my sacred character!

But, oppressed with consciousness, and broken in heart under the sense of guilt, I come, oh Lord! With earnest prayer and tears, supplicating Thee, of thy mercy, to look upon me, and forgive me for his precious merits sake, which are infinitely more unbounded than even all the sins of a whole sinful world! By his cross and passion, I implore, to spare and deliver me, O Lord!

Blessed be thy unspeakable goodness for that wonderful display of divine love, on which alone is my hope and my confidence! Thou hast invited, oh blessed Redeemer! the burdened and heavy laden, the sick in soul, and wearied with sin, to come to Thee, and receive rest. Lord, I come! Be it unto me ac-

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 cording to thy infallible word! Grant me thy precious, thy inestimable rest!

Be with me, thou all-sufficient God, in the dreadful trial through which I am to pass! and graciously vouchsafe to fulfil in me those precious promises which Thou in such fatherly kindness, hast delivered to thy afflicted children! Enable me to see and adore thy disposing hand in this awful, but mournful event; and to contemplate at an humble distance, thy great example, who did go forth, bearing thy cross, and enduring its shame, under the consolitary assurance of the joy set before Thee!

And oh! my triumphant Lord! in the moment of death and in the last hour of conflict, suffer me not to doubt or despond! but sustain me in thy arms of love; and oh, receive and present faultless to thy Father, in the robe of thy righteousness, my poor and unworthy soul, which thou hast redeemed with thy most precious blood.

Thus commending myself and my eternal concerns into thy most faithful hands, in firm hope of a happy reception into thy kingdom: Oh my God, hear me, while I humbly extend my supplications for others; and pray, That thou wouldest bless the King and all his family; that thou wouldest preserve the crown in his house to endless generations, and make him the happy minister of truth, of peace, and of prosperity to his people! Bless that people, O Lord! and shine, as thou hast done, with the light of thy favour, on this little portion of thy boundless creation. Diffuse more and more spirit of Christian piety amongst all ranks and orders of men; and in particular fill their hearts with universal and undissembled love—Love to thee, and love to each other!

Amidst the manifold mercies and blessings vouchsafed through thy gracious influence—thou Sovereign Ruler of all hearts!—to so unworthy a worm, during this dark day of my sorrows, enable me to be thankful; and in the sincerity of heartfelt gratitude, to implore, thine especial blessing on all my beloved fellow-creatures, who have by any means interested themselves in my preservation! May the prayers they have offered for me, return in mercies 'on their own heads! May the sympathy they have shown, refresh and comfort their own hearts! And may all their good endeavours and kindness be amply repaid by a full supply of thy grace, and abundant assistance to them in their day of distress;—in their most anxious hours of need!

To the more particular and immediate instruments of thy providential love and goodness to me, O vouchsafe to impart, Author of all good,—a rich supply of thy choicest comforts! Fill their hearts with thy love, and their lives with thy favour! Guard them in every danger: sooth them in every sorrow: bless them in every laudable undertaking: restore an hundred-fold all their temporal supplies to me and mine: and, after a course of extensive utility, advance them, through the merits of Jesus, to lives of eternal bliss.

Extend, great Father of the world, thy more especial care, and kindness to my nearer and most dear connections. Bless with thy continual presence and protection my dear brother and sister, and all their children and friends! Hold them in thy hand of tender care and mercy; and give them to experience, that in thee there is infinite loving kindness and truth! Look with a tender eye on all their temporal concerns; and after lives of faithfulness and truth, oh bear them to thy bosom, and unite us together in thy eternal love!

But oh, my adorable Lord and hope, suffer me in a more particular manner to offer up to thy sovereign and gracious care my long-tried and most affectionate wife! Husband of the widow, be thou her support! sustain and console her afflicted mind! enable her with patient submission to receive all thy will! and when, in thy good time, thou hast perfected her for thy blessed kingdom, unite again our happy and immortal spirits in celestial love, as thou hast been pleased to unite us in sincere earthly affection! Lord Jesus, vouchsafe unto her thy peculiar grace and all-sufficient consolation!

If I have any enemies, oh, thou who diest for thy enemies, hear my prayers for them! Forgive them all their ill-will to me, and fill their hearts with thy love! And, oh, vouchsafe abundantly to bless and save all those who have either wished or done me evil! Forgive me, gracious God! the wrong or injury I have done to others; and so forgive me my trespasses, as I freely and fully forgive all those who have in any degree trespassed against me. I desire thy grace, to purify my soul from every taint of malevolence; and to fit me, by perfect love, for the society of spirits, whose business and happiness is love!

Glory be to thee, oh God! for all the blessings thou hast granted me from the day of my creation until the present hour; I feel and adore thy exceeding goodness in all; and in this last and closing affliction of my life, I acknowledge most humbly tho

Justice of thy fatherly correction, and bow my head with thankfulness for thy rod! Great and good in all; I adore and magnify thy mercy! I behold, in all, thy love manifestly displayed, and rejoice that I am at once thy creature and thy redeemed!

As such, O Lord, my Creator and Redeemer, I commit my soul into thy faithful hands! Wash it, and purify it in the blood of thy Son from every defiling stain: perfect what is wanting in it; and grant me, poor, returning, weeping, wretched prodigal—grant me the lowest place in thy heavenly house; in and for his sole and all-sufficient merits, the adorable Jesus;—who, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, liveth and reigneth ever, one God, world without end!

Amen and Amen, Lord Jesus!

LETTER

TO THE

REVEREND DR. DODD,

Sent to him during his Confinement in Newgate.

DEAR SIR,

LET it not surprise you in this tremendous hour to be accosted by an old, perhaps forgotten, but still sympathising friend. The world smiles in prosperity; the Christian loves in adversity; and the hour of Nature's sorrow is the important period for such a friendship.

From the first moment the melancholy news had reached my ear, how truly was my heart engaged in prayer and pity! I anticipated the dreadful pangs which rend your soul; and the awful consideration, that these things were but the beginning of sorrow, was ready to draw blood from my heart, as well as tears from my eyes. I turned to him from whom proceeds all that is truly great and good, and was encouraged to entreat the merciful Redeemer to look down with tender pity, and cause this dark night to become the womb of a bright morning, yea, the brightest your eyes have ever seen.

Every stroke of your rod deeply affects me; but above all, I feel for your precious, your immortal soul.

Will you permit me, my dear Sir, to throw aside all reserve, while treating on this important subject? Shall I prevail with you to bear with the manner for the sake of the matter, and despise not truth though ignorantly uttered?

I fear you have lived a long time in that friendship with the world which the spirit of God declares is enmity with himself. However excellent some or many of your actions may have been, you have rested in the letter, not in the spirit of Christianity: you have been contented without the experimental knowledge of those words, "He that is in Christ Jesus is a new creature." Your will, your affections, your desires and delights, have they not all been fixed on earthly objects? Rejoicing in the possession, or mourning the disappointment, your daily delight has not been in the divine communications of the Holy Spirit; fellowship with God has not been your chiefest joy; the pursuit of empty shadows found nearer access to your heart than the noble choice of following the despised Nazarene. Think not, dear Sir, I draw this judgment from the last unhappy event. O, no; that I only consider as the natural fruit of the unregenerate heart. The point I aim at is, the want of that change, that death unto sin, that new birth unto righteousness, whereby the children of wrath become the children of grace. St. Paul says, "I have fought the good fight, I have kept the faith:" therefore he was willing to be offered up, since nothing but a crown of righteousness presented itself to his opening prospect. He had kept that faith which purifieth the heart, overcometh the world, and quencheth all the fiery darts of the evil one.

I remember, when I was about fourteen, the season in which I was favoured with your most intimate acquaintance, you once told a story which I shall never forget, concerning one of the Scots divines, who said on his death-bed, "If every stone, timber, and nail in this house, could speak, they would bear witness to the many hours of sweet communion my soul hath spent with God therein." O, Sir, can the beams of your house bear witness that your enjoyments have been such as eternity shall ripen! And this heavenly disposition, you must be sensible, can alone fit us for the enjoyment of the New Jerusalem. No object can give pleasure unless it meets with a sense which suits and apprehends it. The grain of corn is more welcome to the fowl than the richest pearl: So to the soul whose treasure is yet on earth, the beauties of the lovely Jesus shine in vain! But, alas! who can break this adamantine chain? Who can unlock the

heart bound down with twice ten thousand ties, and bring the captive soul into the glorious liberty of the sons of God? Can disappointment, can reproach, dishonour, loss, or even death itself? Alas! these may torment, but never change the heart: it is a sight of the crucified Jesus alone which breaks your heart in pieces. This Jesus waits to do you good; hear him saying, Thou has destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help. O that you would cry; his ear attends the softest prayer. This is my fear, lest you should forget there is no way into the sheepfold but through the door, and no way of entering that door but knowing ourselves to be lost and undone creatures, whose ways have been altogether perverse before him, and then to be saved by faith in Christ alone.

How often has Christ appeared delightful even in a prison! Several have praised God for bringing them there, and by that means awakening them to a knowledge of their lost estate, that they might be made acquainted with a happiness till then unknown. Adorable Jesus! so work on the soul of this my unhappy friend, display thy pardoning love, and write it on his aching heart:

“No; my best actions cannot save,

“But thou must cleanse e’en them;

“Yet when on thee I do believe,

“My worst shall not condemn.”

I know not how to break off. My spirit deeply mourns both for your present and approaching sufferings, and equally for her who so sadly shares your every woe. Had you remained in prosperity, nothing would have been farther from my thought, than a renewal of acquaintance; for I have found, in being despised and trampled under foot of the great ones of the earth, more solid peace, more lasting joy, than my warmest wishes could ever have expected: but now I cannot forget you if I would, I long for your salvation: Will you acknowledge, all the wisdom of the world can never save you? Will you look for salvation from the mere mercy of God? How many have gone triumphantly to glory, even from under the hand of an executioner! My dear Sir, that triumph may be yours; and if you do not reject it, it surely shall. The king of terrors shall appear

no longer terrible; and your happy spirit, loosed from every earthly tie, and delighted with the freedom of the living water, shall spring into eternity with so feeling a joy as you have never known in all your life. You have tried the world, and found it empty. Never did man strive more for the honours of it than you have done; for that, you turned your back on the closest followers of the Lamb, the little few despised indeed of man, but whose lives were hid with Christ in God; for that you have been conformed in all your life and conversation to the customs, fashions, and maxims of it: but while you were a slave to man, ungrateful man! who neither thanked nor paid you, you slighted Him who is able to cast both body and soul into hell. But, O, the unbounded love of Jesus! He blasted all your hopes; He chastened and corrected. For what end! Only to convince you how ready he is to receive and make you a beloved son. The wicked have no bands in their death, they will not listen to awakening fears; but whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth: yea, the body may be given up to suffer, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.

I am not yet without hope, even for your life. It is founded on this: I know the hearts of all are in the hand of my God, from the king on the throne to the beggar on the dunghill; and he turneth them what way soever he will. I know, if you seek but Daniel's faith, Daniel's God can shut the lion's mouth. If, with Nebuchadnezzar you have learned to acknowledge the Most High Ruler over all, he can restore you again to your former state, or else take you to behold his glory. When I consider your great talents, and how much you might have done for God, I cannot help crying to the Lord once more to send you into his vineyard with a changed heart full of the Holy Ghost and power. And now, my dear Sir, what shall I say? My heart is full: I know not how to leave off: It is as though my pen could not part from the paper. Nature shrinks from that pang which is usually the sad attendant of a last farewell: but Grace cries out, Yet there is hope. And eternity of joy presents a kingdom where no horrid alarm, of war shall break our eternal repose; where sorrow, death, and parting shall be no more; and the Royal Army of Cross-bearers, who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, are ready to embrace and welcome you among them.

To that efficacious blood, with tears of love and sorrow,
I commit you; and though with reluctance, I must now con-
clude,

Your sincerely affectionate
and sympathising friend,

MARY BOSANQUET.

Feb, 1777.

*By a series of Correspondence, almost weekly, from the
above date, till within three days of his execution, Miss
Bosanquet says she had reason to believe he felt a contrite
Heart, and found the Sinner's Friend to be his.—June
25th, he wrote her his last Farewell, as follows :*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

June 25, 1777.

ON Friday morning I am to be made immortal! I die with
a heart truly contrite, and broken under a sense of its great
and manifold offences, but comforted and sustained by a firm
faith in the pardoning love of Jesus Christ. My earnest prayers
to God are, that we may meet and know each other in that
kingdom, towards which you have been so long and so happily
travelling. I return you my most affectionate thanks for all
your friendly attention to me; and have no doubt, should any
opportunity offer, you will remember my excellent, but most
afflicted partner in distress. I do not know where to direct to
worthy Mr. Parher, but beg to trouble you with my dying love
and kind remembrance to him. The Lord Jesus Christ be with
our spirits. Amen.

W. DODD.

o Soon after the Doctor's death, the lady received from a faithful minister of Jesus Christ, who constantly attended him, a very encouraging account, in which he declares he believes him to be singing the songs of the redeemed, and concludes his letter with the following words:

"Thus ended the mortal, and began the never-ceasing life of your old and my new friend: and I bless God our Saviour for this new proof of his saving grace, and the power of his precious blood.

"The time is elapsed; I have written more than I intended, and yet not a tenth part of what I could. You may be comforted, as I have been richly. Your and my fears are at an end.

"May the God of all grace keep your and my heart in the knowledge of him, yea, cause us to grow in grace and love! This is the earnest prayer of

"Your affectionate friend,

"and willing servant in Christ."

DR. DODD'S

ACCOUNT OF HIMSELF*.

THE greatest affliction and oppression to my mind at present is, the piercing reflection that I, who have lived all my life in an endeavour to promote the truth of Christianity, should now become an obstacle to that truth, and a scandal to that profession;—that I, who have with all my power, and with all sincerity, laboured to do good, and be a blessing to my fellow-creatures, should now become an evil and a curse. What shall I, can I, ought I to do, to prevent, as much as in me lies, any such dreadful consequences of my shame and my crime? Will a public attestation of my sincere belief of Christianity, and an ingenuous detail and confession of my offences, be of any avail?—In order to do this, and to acquaint you in a few words with a perfect knowledge of myself (though I should wish to do it more fully), be so good as to consider the few following particulars:

I entered very young on public life, very innocent—very ignorant—and very ingenuous. I lived many happy years at West Ham, in an uninterrupted and successful discharge of my duty. A disappointment in the living of that parish obliged me to exert myself; and I engaged for a chapel near Buckingham Gate. Great success attended the undertaking: it pleased and elated me. At the same time Lord Chesterfield, to whom I was personally unknown, offered me the care of his heir, Mr. Stanhope†. By the advice of my dear friend, now in heaven, Dr. Squire, I engaged, under promises which were not performed. Such

* Of this account Dr. Dodd may be said to have only drawn the outlines; the picture, as it appears, was finished by Dr. Johnson.

† The present Lord Chesterfield.

a distinction too, you must know, served to increase a young man's vanity. I was naturally led into more extensive and important connections, and, of course, into greater expences and more dissipations. Indeed, before, I never dissipated at all—for many, many years, never seeing a play-house, or any public place, but living entirely in Christian duties. Thus brought to town, and introduced to gay life, I fell into its snares. Ambition and vanity led me on. My temper, naturally cheerful, was pleased with company; naturally generous, it knew not the use of money; it was a stranger to the useful science of economy and frugality; nor could it withhold from distress, what it too much (often) wanted itself.

Besides this, the habit of uniform, regular, sober piety, and of watchfulness and devotion, wearing off, amidst this unavoidable scene of dissipation, I was not, as at West Ham, the innocent man that I lived there. I committed offences against my God! which yet, I bless him, were always, in reflection, detestable to me.

But my greatest evil was expence. To supply it, I fell into the dreadful and ruinous mode of raising money by annuities. The annuities devoured me. Still I exerted myself by every means to do what I thought right, and built my hopes of perfect extrication from all my difficulties when my young and beloved pupil should come of age. But, alas! during this interval, which was not very long, I declare with solemn truth, that I never varied from the steady belief of the Christian doctrines! I preached them with all my power, and kept back nothing from my congregations which I thought might tend to their welfare; and I was very successful in this way during the time. Nor, though I spent in dissipation many hours which I ought not, but to which my connections inevitably led, was I idle during this period; as my Commentary on the Bible, my Sermons to Young Men, and several other publications prove. I can say too, with pleasure, that I studiously employed my interest, through the connections I had, for the good of others. I never forgot or neglected the cause of the distressed; many, if need were, could bear me witness. Let it suffice to say, that during this period I instituted the Charity for the Discharge of Debtors.

Such is the plain and ingenuous detail of myself. I sincerely lament all I have done wrong. I love, and ever did, religion and goodness. I hate and abhor vice, and myself for ever having committed any. I look with peculiar detestation on the

crime to which I am at present obnoxious ; and I wish before I die, of all things, if possible, to make amends—by the most sincere and full confession and humiliation of myself.

W. DODD.

May 21, 1777.

The following DECLARATION DR. DODD inclosed in a Letter to a Friend some time before he suffered.

THOUGH I acknowledge in all its atrocity, and more especially with a view to my peculiar circumstances and character, the offence for which I suffer,—yet, considering that it is punished with such sanguinary severity in no commercial state under heaven, and that in my case it has been fully atoned for, so far as human creatures can atone to each other, I cannot but judge my punishment rather hard:—and still more so, as that public (for whose benefit and example such ignominious death and punishment can alone be intended, has with a pleading, and almost unanimous) voice supplicated the Throne, in the most humble manner, to show mercy, and avert the abhorred stroke, by assigning another, though perhaps not less afflictive punishment.

In this dispensation, however, I look far beyond the hand of poor human vengeance, and adore the justice and goodness of God, who, correcting me in judgment for deviations from the purity of his Gospel, as a distinguished minister of it, has been pleased to call me thus by death to proclaim my repentance, and to attest my faith in him; and to declare to all my fellow-creatures, and to my beloved countrymen in particular (for whose love to me I am under the highest obligations) my firm belief of the principles which I have long preached, and in my writings delivered with the utmost truth and sincerity; and which I thus seal with my blood, in perfect resignation to the will of my adorable Master, and in a firm dependence on those principles for the salvation of my own soul.

W. DODD.

Letters to Two Noble Lords of His MAJESTY'S Most Honourable Privy Council.

LETTER I.

MY LORD*,

I HAVE committed a capital crime, for which the sentence of the law has passed upon me; and whether that sentence shall be executed in its full rigour, may, perhaps, depend upon the suffrage of your Lordship.

The shame and self-reproach with which I now solicit your commiseration, I hope no man will ever feel, who has not deserved to feel them like myself. But I will not despair of being heard with pity, when, under the terrors of a speedy and disgraceful death, I most humbly implore your Lordship's intercession.

My life has not been wholly useless; I have laboured in my calling diligently and successfully; but success inflamed my vanity, and my heart betrayed me. Violent passions have exposed me to violent temptations; but I am not the first whom temptation has overthrown. I have, in all my deviations, kept Right always in view, and have invariably resolved to return to it. Whether, in a prosperous state, I should have kept my resolution, public justice has not suffered me to know.

My crime has been indeed atrocious, but my punishment has not been light. From a height of reputation, which perhaps raised envy in others, and certainly produced pride in myself, I have fallen to the lowest and grossest infamy; from an income which prudence might have made plentiful, I am reduced to live on those remains of charity which infamy has left me.

When so much has been given to justice I humbly entreat,

* Lord North, then Prime Minister.

that life, such as it must now be, may be given to mercy; and that your Lordship's influence may be employed in disposing our Sovereign to look with compassion on,

My LORD,

Your LORDSHIP's most humble supplicant,

WILLIAM DODD.

June 11, 1777.

LETTER II.

MY LORD*,

Nor many days are now to pass before the fate of one of the most miserable of human beings will be finally determined. The efficacy of your Lordship's voice is well known; and whether I shall immediately suffer an ignominious death, or wander the rest of my days in ignominious exile, your opinion will probably determine. Do not refuse, my Lord, to hear the plea, whatever it may be, which I humbly oppose to the extremity of justice.

I acknowledge, my Lord, the atrociousness of my crime; I admit the truth of the verdict that condemned me; yet I hope, that when my evil is censured, my good may likewise be remembered; and that it may be considered how much that society which is injured by my fraud, has been benefited by my charitable labours. I have offended; I am penitent; I entreat but for life, for a life which must pass certainly in dishonour, and probably in want. Do not refuse, my Lord, to compassionate a man who, blasted in fame and ruined in fortune, yet shrieks with terror from the precipice of eternity. Let me live, however miserable; and let my miseries warn all those to whom they shall be known, against self-indulgence, vanity, and profusion.

Once more, my Lord, let me beg for life; and when you see me going from the gloom of a prison to the penury of

Earl Mansfield.

Danishment, do not consider public justice as wholly unsatisfied .
by the sufferings of,

My LORD,

Your LORDSHIP's most humble supplicant,

WILLIAM DODD.

June 11, 1777.

DR. DODD'S PETITION,

(PRESENTED BY HIS BROTHER)

TO THE KING'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY.

SIRE,

It is most humbly presented to Your Majesty by William Dodd,
the unhappy convict now under sentence of death,

That William Dodd, acknowledging the justice of the sentence denounced against him, has no hope or refuge but in Your Majesty's clemency :

That though to recollect or mention the usefulness of his life, or the efficacy of his ministry, must overwhelm him in his present condition with shame and sorrow, he yet humbly hopes that his past labours will not wholly be forgotten; and that the zeal with which he has exhorted others to a good life, though it does not extenuate his crime, may mitigate his punishment :

That debased as he is by ignominy, and distressed as he is by poverty, scorned by the world, and detested by himself, deprived of all external comforts, and afflicted by consciousness of guilt, he can derive no hopes of longer life, but that of repairing the injury he has done to mankind, by exhibiting an example of shame and submission, and of expiating his sins by prayer and penitence :

That for this end he humbly implores from the clemency of Your Majesty, the continuance of a life legally forfeited; and of the days which by your gracious compassion he may yet live, no one shall pass without a prayer, that Your Majesty, after a

long life of happiness and honour, may stand at the final day of judgment, among the merciful that obtain mercy.

So fervently prays the most distressed and wretched of Your Majesty's subjects,

WILLIAM DODD.

MRS. DODD'S PETITION,

(PRESENTED BY HERSELF)

TO THE QUEEN'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY.

MADAM,

It is most humbly represented by Mary Dodd, the wife of Dr. William Dodd, now lying in prison under sentence of death.

That she has been the wife of this unhappy man more than twenty-seven years, and has lived with him in the greatest happiness of conjugal union, and the highest state of conjugal confidence.

That she has been a constant witness of his unwearied endeavours for public good, and his laborious attendance on charitable institutions. Many are the families whom his care has delivered from want; many are the hearts which he has freed from pain, and the faces which he has cleared from sorrow.

That therefore she most humbly throws herself at the feet of the Queen, earnestly entreating that the petition of a distressed wife, asking mercy for a husband, may be considered as naturally soliciting the compassion of Her Majesty; and that when her wisdom has compared the offender's good actions with his crime, she will be pleased to represent his case to our Most Gracious Sovereign in such terms as may dispose him to mitigate the rigour of the law.

So prays Your Majesty's most dutiful subject and suppliant,

MARY DODD.

SUCH were the last thoughts of a man whom we have seen exulting in popularity, and sunk in shame. For his reputation, which no man can give to himself, those who conferred it are to answer. Of his public ministry, the means of judging were sufficiently attainable. He must be allowed to preach well, whose sermons strike the audience with forcible conviction. Of his life, those who thought it consistent with his doctrine, did not originally form false notions. He was at first what he endeavoured to make others; but the world broke down his resolution, and he in time ceased to exemplify his own instructions.

Let those who are tempted to his faults, tremble at his punishment; and those whom he impressed from the pulpit with religious sentiments, endeavour to confirm them, by considering the regret and self-abhorrence with which he reviewed in prison his deviations from rectitude.

Whatever assistance his anxiety might prompt him to solicit in forming the petitions (which, however, he must be considered as confirming by his name), the account of his past life, and of his dying sentiments, are the effusions of his own mind. Those who read them with the proper disposition, will not read in vain.

A few days before DR. DODD suffered Death, the following Observations on the Propriety of Pardoning him, were written and sent to the Public Papers by DR. JOHNSON.

YESTERDAY was presented to the Secretary of State, by the Earl Percy, a Petition in favour of Dr. Dodd, signed by twenty-three thousand hands. On this occasion it is natural to consider—

That in all countries penal laws have been relaxed, as particular reasons have emerged:

That a life formerly beneficent, a single action eminently good, or even the power of being useful to the public, have been sufficient to protect the life of a delinquent:

That no arbiter of life and death has ever been censured for granting the life of a criminal to honest and powerful solicitation:

That the man for whom a nation petitions, must be presumed to have merit uncommon in kind or in degree: for however the mode of collecting subscriptions, or the right of judgment exer-

cised by the subscribers, may be open to dispute, it is at least plain that something is done for this man, that was never done for any other; and Government, which must proceed upon general views, may rationally conclude that this man is something better than other offenders have been, or has done something more than others have done:

That though the people cannot judge of the administration of justice so well as their governors, yet their voice has always been regarded:

That this is a case in which the petitioners determine against their own interest; those for whose protection the law was made, enact its relaxation; and our Governors cannot be charged with the consequences which the people bring upon themselves:

That as this is a case without example, it will probably be without consequences, and many ages will elapse before such a crime is again committed by such a man:

That though life be spared, justice may be satisfied with ruin, imprisonment, exile, infamy, and penury.

THE END.

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